

UNITING A DIVIDED HOUSE: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN MULTIPLE
GENERATIONS THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP; A PRAXIS FOR
INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
DEDICATION	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ABBREVIATIONS	ix
EPIGRAPH.....	x
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS	3
The General Nature and Content of the Project.....	9
Conclusion	10
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	12
Exegesis of Numbers 27:15-21	15
Exegesis of Acts 16:1-5	21
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS	27
Early Beginnings.....	29
Social Consciousness	33

	DuBois Significance Today	39
4.	THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	43
	Ecclesiology- The Theology of the Church	44
	Theological Relevance of the Subject and Project	53
	Conclusion	57
5.	THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	60
	Theoretical Foundations in Ministry Practice.....	65
	Theoretical Foundations from Another Discipline	77
6.	PROJECT ANALYSIS	84
	Methodology and Implementation.....	89
	Conclusion	105
APPENDIX		
A.	APPENDIX A FIELD NOTE TEMPLATE.....	108
B.	APPENDIX B DISCOVERY GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE 1	109
C.	APPENDIX C DISCOVERY GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE 2	110
D.	APPENDIX D GENERATIONAL DETAILS OF THE 2 GROUPS	111
BIBLIOGRAPHY		112

ABSTRACT

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The goal of this study is to design a model for intergenerational collaboration to be used across ministries promote intergenerational ministry. The project was implemented at Mount Moriah Baptist Church, in Brockton, MA. Four Bible study lessons on mentoring and discipleship were taught followed by a sermon on each subject matter. Furthermore, lessons on generational differences, collaboration, and community engagement were taught followed by group discussions. Data triangulation was used to measure the project through questionnaires, interviews and group discussions. The project created a deeper understanding of discipleship, mentoring, and a greater willingness to engage in intergenerational ministry opportunities.

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courage, strength and determination, I say thank you. I also must thank my Aunt Thelma for her sense of humor and helping me to find joy in all things. I would be remised if I did not say thank you to Elisha for your continued support and prayer throughout this journey.

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this work to five beloved people who have meant and continue to mean so much to me. Although they are no longer on this side of heaven their memories continue to resonate with me. To my paternal grandparents, John & Estelle Page, thank you for being the rock and providing a love that knew no bounds, and who taught us the value of hard work and prayer. To my maternal grandparents Odest Jefferson Watson, Mary Seay and Mr. Seay, thank you for your limitless love, sacrifices made and instilling the importance of education. Your love too knew no bounds, and your spirit lives on.

ABBREVIATIONS

GCTS	Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
MMBC	Mount Moriah Baptist Church
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NASB	New American Standard Bible
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

“We on our backs staring at the stars above, talking about what we going to be when we grow up, I said what you wanna be? She said, ‘Alive.’”

—Outkast, *The Art of Storytelling* (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION

Sunday morning worship is the climax of the week at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church where the author currently serves as the Pastor. The church's congregational demographic makeup is primarily African Americans, Caribbean Americans, and other cultures, and comprises of parishioners from at least five different generations. This leads to an exciting blending of generations and cultures whom worship together and who foster a rich and diverse community. However, MMBC like many other congregations in North America has experience some challenges with age-segregations, and seeks to create an intergenerational worship experienced. There are some, who are part of the millennial and generation Y, and who do not feel that their voices are valued even though they are connected to the ministry and church community. There are some people, who are older and part of the baby boomer generation and find it difficult engaging and connecting with those of younger generations. Making worship intergenerational requires committing to people of all ages, valuing each generation, and seeing all people as significant and valuable in the body of Christ. If the church is to develop new leadership, evangelize and reach others, and promote the gospel, then we must create a culture that values, respects, and engages each generation. Bridging the gap between multiple generations and culture, will result in developing a much more vibrant worship experience.

The focus of this thesis then, is to develop and design an effective model that will help Mount Moriah Baptist Church move towards a more dynamic intergenerational church community. The first chapter will focus on addressing the problem and discuss the rationale for my research. Chapter two examines Numbers 27:15-21 and Acts 16:1-5. Both passages examined reveal how God used mentorship and discipleship to develop the next generation of leadership. Chapter three examines the works of W.E.B Dubois and how his scholarly works have influenced generations of scholars, leaders and have been used to create intergenerational organizations such as SNCC and other civil rights organizations. Chapter four examines the theological themes of the Church (ecclesiology) as well as the ordinances of baptism and communion. Chapter five observes theories and models in practical ministry as well as theories and models from noted secular psychologist Dr. Tim Elmore, who is a leading psychologist and expert on Generations Y and Z.

Lastly, the final chapter provides an overview of the research analysis, further evaluations, and personal reflection on how this project impacted me, and impacted my church.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The author of this document has served as the Senior Pastor at Mount Moriah Baptist Church, since June of 2012 and has observed challenges in different ministries that sometimes arise whenever there is transition of leadership. The church went through a major transition of leadership when the founding pastor retired and moved. Here was a man, who along with his family and fifty other families came together and committed themselves to becoming a church community in the city of Brockton, MA. In His tenure and under his leadership the church, became a thriving and vibrant church, utilizing technology to do cutting edge ministry and provided services that ministered to the needs of the community. It was a church with influence in the city of Brockton and catered to a wide range of members. Several choirs sang praises of Zion, the youth and children's ministry grew and was exciting, and the church was known for providing sound biblical teaching, exegetical preaching, and learning opportunities. This gave way to approximately thirty-five members who graduated from Gordon-Conwell seminary. However, when the Pastor decided it was time to retire, the church developed a transitional team and planned to aid in their search for their next Pastor. Th team worked to develop a plan for the transition. However, due to unforeseen circumstance, the Church went through a period of membership decline. During this transition, the membership went from over three hundred members, to about one hundred members.

Some of these persons who elected to leave, and attend other houses of worship, were younger families, young adults, and youth. Those who stayed found themselves with the reality and challenge of addressing the migration of persons. Not only was the church faced with the challenges of people leaving the church, but other churches were planted in the city, that offered ministries that attracted youth and young adults. These ministries offered a different worship experience and offered an alternative to the challenges that Mount Moriah was facing. Some members went on to live in different states and continued their ministry.

Although Mount Moriah is known for her pulpit integrity and being a strong teaching and preaching church, yet that was not enough proof to retain some of the membership. Mount Moriah experienced an exodus of persons, partly due to the leadership transition, but that was not the only factor. The church also faced the challenge of recognizing what to do to stop the hemorrhaging of people leaving, and still develop ministries that were attractive to all generations. For those who stayed, tensions developed over strong convictions and theological beliefs. Some youth felt that they were judged based on their dressing and cultural expression. There were some who felt cast aside because of unwed pregnancy, others who had tattoos, and body piercings. Due to lack of support, they felt uncomfortable to come to the house of worship and continue their engagement in worship. This phenomenon is not unique to Mount Moriah, as many organizations struggle to bridge the gap between generations, but it is certainly a phenomenon Mount Moriah has to recognize and find a way to engage vibrant worship and, bible studies and prayer, and from Christian community.

The intent then of this research is to explore biblical, historical, and theological models that will encourage engagement and collaboration amongst the changing generations. This model will contribute to discipleship and help people to grow in their faith walk as they invest their time, talents, and gifts in serving one another, ultimately modeling the love of Jesus Christ, who states in John 13:34-35 *“A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so also you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”*

The candidate's ministry training and initial exposure to discipleship began at St. John's Baptist Church located in Woburn, MA, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Larry Edmunds. Although he was raised in a Christian household, joining St. John's was a conscious and intentional decision by him to be a part of a ministry outside of his parent's influence. As a freshman in college, he understood the importance of plugging into a church where his faith could develop, and where he could learn and grow from strong Godly men. It was the men of the church who embraced the author and took him under their wings to disciple, and to develop spiritual leadership qualities. They also helped to formulate a deep and personal relationship with Christ. The Doctoral candidate became actively involved with the church, singing on the Praise & Worship team and getting involved with the Christian Educational ministry. He also served as a Sunday School teacher. Both Rev. Edmunds and Darin Poullard began to see ministry gifts in the author and they became his spiritual guides. Their mentorship provided the candidate with spiritual insight and guidance. They exposed the candidate to the inner workings of the church. Dr. Edmunds became his spiritual Father, and Pastor Poullard, became his older brother in the ministry. These intergenerational relationships proved to be mutually

beneficial as he served them and they guided him. The church became a source of strength and began to help shape the candidate spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and professionally.

In January of 2003, the candidate experienced in a dream, that God was calling him into the ministry. It was a call to serve God and to serve His people. After much prayer and dialogue with his Pastor Rev. Dr. Larry Edmunds and mentor Rev. Darrin Poullard, they agreed that there was indeed a "calling" on his life and set a date for him to preach his initial sermon in March of 2003. That day the local church affirmed his calling and issued a ministerial license to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a newly licensed preacher, the candidate immersed himself in studying and working in several areas of the church. Occasionally, he was called upon to preach at other churches. At his home church, he took the opportunity to share the gospel. Over time, he began working as the Youth Minister and started to develop his own network of Ministers, Pastor's and youth workers in the city, which also included the National Baptist Convention. Encouraged by Rev. Edmunds, the author attended an open house at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and made a decision to enroll and further equip himself for ministry. He enrolled in Gordon-Conwell's Theological Seminary (Center for Urban Ministry) in Boston, MA, and was a serious budding theologian. His theological training afforded him to be challenged and help broaden his theological perspectives on God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Like a sponge, the candidate soaked up all he could in the disciplines, Christian Doctrine, Systematic Theology, Biblical Greek and the Hebrew languages. As he was being nurtured, he formed long lasting relationships with friends, colleagues, and professors who further contributed to his development.

While in seminary, the author was selected to participate in the Pierce Fellowship. This was a fellowship designed for students who have demonstrated experience and ongoing commitment to disciple-building and spiritual formation. Each member of the Fellowship built a close and intimate relationship with a mentor who worked with them. The Pierce Center Staff poured into each student and helped them mature in areas of spiritual disciplines. This program focused on three major areas; Habits of the heart, Spiritual Community, and Discipleship Building. The group participated in spiritual retreats, road trips to the Navigator conferences, and formed a community within the body of students at Gordon-Conwell. To this day, the candidate keeps in touch with his Pierce Fellowship mentor Frank Tully, who was called to minister in Australia in 2013 along with his wife and other students. This experience of being a Pierce fellow, taught those who participated the importance of Intentional Discipleship making. Most churches and Pastors believe in the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:16-20¹. However, implementing and making disciples is something that must be planned, must be strategic, and it must be intentional.

The support the candidate received while attending St. John's Baptist Church, college, matriculating through seminary, has been instrumental in shaping his spiritual walk and in the formation of his theological perspective of ministry. The men and women who believed in love and support, served as an example of what positive intergenerational ministry can produce. The unique gifts and persons who shared in the life of the author and along with other young men and woman gave them the foundational tools to contribute to society and develop their gifts. Because of their love, the candidate,

was given foundational tools that proved to be foundational in ministry. As the candidate reflects on the time spent with men and women the Lord used at the church, he acknowledges that he is a direct beneficiary of sound discipleship and strong mentorship by men grounded in the faith. Serving as a minister on staff, the candidate learned how to work as part of a ministerial team. He served as the Youth and Young Adult minister while working alongside a ministerial team that consisted of five ministers. Each month the Pastor would meet with the staff, where he discussed various dynamics of the ministries that the team oversaw. It was his example that the candidate also learned how to develop a team of volunteers to share in the work of the Youth and Young Adult ministry. Pastor Edmunds was great at developing leaders. By observation, he would delegate work among the ministerial team, and then empower them to fulfill their assignments. Dr. Edmunds was not a micro manager. He entrusted the individuals to carry out their assignments with excellence and would provide coaching and guidance when necessary. Trust between staff members and the creation of a safe environment to make mistakes, allowed the staff to be creative in their ministries. Dr. Edmunds allowed the staff to make mistakes, if they grew from their own mistakes. He would meet with us both in group settings and in one-on-one settings. There were intimate moments the candidate can recall, of making runs to Dunkin Donuts to get coffee for them to share. They would sip coffee and talk for hours. This was later called the coffee discussing ministry, where we discussed relationships, ministry, academics, and life. These experiences all contributed to the author's spiritual formation. Unknowingly, he was being made a disciple of Jesus Christ. In the scriptures, there were moments where Jesus met with His disciples in group settings for teaching and modeling for them how to do

ministry. There were also other times when He would pull one of them aside and pour into Him. For the candidate, coffee ministry was the equivalent, of Jesus pouring into His disciples in an intimate way.

Not only was Pastor Edmunds intentional with developing the preachers of St. John's, but he was intentional in creating a space where men could come together around a table, and challenge each other. There were many nights around that table where it sounded like men arguing over theology; but in reality, the brothers were passionate about studying God's word. As an active participant in the men's Bible study, the author learned that it was okay to be passionate about God's word. St. John's had a model of Family Bible study that took place on Friday night's, where the children met in different classes, the young adults met for study, and the women met separately from the men. The time sitting around the table on Friday nights with the men was instrumental in helping the author of this document theology and aided his healing in dealing with his own brokenness. The atmosphere of the brothers engaging in real and significant dialogue created a safe space for to be open, honest and transparent. It was in these sessions, that the author began to develop a yearning for God and God's people in the form of Pastoral care. Having persons in his life that would hold him accountable, and who would minister to his brokenness and inspired him to do the same for someone else. In essence, what he learned during his tenure at St. John's he has emulated in his ministry.

The General Nature and Content of the Project

Certainly, there are many methods and models for Pastoral leaders and for churches to apply and follow. The intent is not to re-invent the wheel when it comes to

discipleship-making but to examine the praxis of Jesus Christ in the gospels, and how He called, developed, equipped, authorized, and sent out the twelve Disciples into the world to do ministry and to be his representation in this world. Upon examining this, the author will then look at a multitude of models that can be developed into a ministry of intentional disciple making with an emphasis on developing healthy intra-generational relationships.

Many discipleship models include four major components. They are: 1) establishing a connection with a new convert, 2) equipping the new convert, 3) sending/authorizing the convert, 4) evangelizing and replication.

Why do we need to make disciples? Simply put because it is the high commission that our Lord Jesus gave to His Disciples and the Church. Every person who is born again, and sits in our pews are not necessarily disciples. Some people have a conversion and never grow or, are equipped to do the work of ministry, but have not done it. They are content with going to church, sitting in the pews and going home. They are not engaged in the ministry and are not interested in investing in the work of the local ministry. There, of course, is no one magical way to make disciples. Many churches use small groups, while others create other models to create effective discipleship ministries. Whichever model is used, it must be implemented with the intentional effort of making disciples.

For us to develop our model at Mount Moriah, we must first create an accurate picture that includes different generations and culture of where we are and where we are going. To do this, a small discovery group of eight to ten individuals will be drawn from various ministries in the congregation. They will be invited to participate in both pre-and post-survey question followed by a healthy discussion. The survey questions and the

focus of the group will be critical in assessing the participants' perspective of what is discipleship and what is their understanding of intergenerational ministry. This group will be comprised of youth, young adults, middle-aged adults, and senior citizens. The intent is to gauge various perspectives, characteristics, and challenges each generation has and educate the participants of in understanding one another's generation. Secondly, the discovery group will look at the biblical text to determine what are ideal disciple-making models the Bible prescribes, and develop an ideal model for the church. Next, the group will introspectively assess where they are today and where they want to be. Lastly, a timeline and plan of action will be implemented to develop a model that is replicable across ministries that promote leadership development, deeper relationship, and stronger collaboration. Because of this research and participation of the discovery, the group is to implement a dynamic discipleship model at Mount Moriah, that we will create new excitement at the church, where people will get excited about what God is doing in their lives and the lives of those around us.

Over the next two and a half year' research will be instrumental in developing this ministry project, and create a model that is simple to implement and have a lasting impact. If the church can bridge the gap between different generations, discipleship happens mentorship takes place, and church relationships improve. One of the models the author is most interested in as stated before is the model of Jesus Christ. Why and how did he call those first disciples who came to him and who followed him? What sort of things was he intentional about pouring into them to equip them for ministry after he would depart? What were the expectations that he required of them? These are all questions that will be answered during sound research in biblical studies.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

In a recent article in Lifeway magazine entitled "Have a mentor; Be a Mentor-the biblical model of mentoring". In the article the writer suggest "*for the first time in the history of the Christian Church, generations aren't worshipping together. It now appears normal to see older generations meeting together wearing suits and singing hymns, boomers wearing Hawaiian shirts and singing peppy songs, and emerging generations meeting in dark rooms singing in minor keys*"¹. Although in our churches we have cross-generational worshippers, there are differences in how people dress, what type of music is preferred, and even methods of reading the scripture that is being preached or taught from. All of these differences factor into how a church reaches and desires to minister cross generationally. The article continues by suggesting that most young adults want to actually engage in worship, and to learn and interact with older generations. How then can we form a bridge in the church that will foster and encourage healthy relationships between different generations of worshippers? How can Baby Boomers embrace millennial's in the worship experience, and invite them to participate in the work of ministry? How can we as the church appreciate the gifts of different generations in ministry? The exegetical research presented in this chapter will reveal biblical passages

¹ Lifeway Staff (2015, July). "Have a mentor; Be a mentor-the biblical model of mentoring" accessed September 16, 2015, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Biblical-model-of-mentoring>.

that will serve as a biblical foundation on bridging the gap between generations with the purpose of doing kingdom work.

In the Bible, the sharing of the knowledge of God was passed down from generation to generation. Psalm 78:5-6 says, “*For He established a testimony in Jacob and Appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, 6 That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell their children*”. The idea of sharing the knowledge of God through mentoring and discipleship, is a reoccurring and consistent theme throughout the Old and New Testaments.

The purpose then of this document is exegete a passage from the Old Testament, and one passage from the New Testament that will serve as Biblical Foundation for my Doctorate of Ministry project. The passages selected are: Numbers 27:15-21 and Acts 16:1-5. The ending goal of studying these passages is to reveal that God develops the next generation of leaders through mentoring/discipleship relationships between seasoned individuals and younger individuals, creating a bridge between the generations for the sake of ministry.

In Numbers 27:15-21, we are privileged to eavesdrop on a conversation between Moses and the Lord God. In the conversation, Moses petitions to the Lord God for someone to be raised to lead Israel. The Lord responds to Moses by saying to him to “Take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hands on him”. Here is a classic example of a mentor/discipleship relationship.

In the New Testament, we find in Acts 16:1-5, the Apostle Paul calls and begins to work with a young preacher by the name of Timothy. God uses Paul to pour into

Timothy and to prepare Timothy for ministry. It is clear to me then, that God indeed values intergenerational relationships that are mutually beneficial to the participants involved.

The study these periscopes of scripture will reveal how God values relationships between seasoned persons and individuals who are being called to service to succeed them in some capacity. Based on these passages, we will examine how each one of these periscopes will reveal how God always had a succession plan in various capacities. We will see Joshua succeed Moses in the office of Leader, Elisha succeed Elijah in the office of prophet, Paul accepted by his peers because of Barnabas, and of course, Timothy continuing the Apostolic work of Paul.

If we as the church are to continue to carry the gospel outside the four walls of the church, if we as the church are to continue to serve our communities, if as the church are to collectively worship together, then we as a church must learn to come together, bridging the generational gaps, so that ministry will continue to be dynamic and effective.

Exegesis of Numbers 27:15-21²

15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying,

16 “May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the community,”³

² All scripture is taken from the NASB. New American Standard Bible

³ The LXX reads “this synagogue” or “community”. The Hebrew prepositional phrase **עַל־הָעֵדָה** is translated as community, however most English translations translate this phrase as congregation.

17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the assembly of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd.”

18 So the Lord said to Moses, “take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hands on him;

19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the entire congregation, and commission him in their sight.

If we are to understand Numbers 27:15-21, it is of great importance to consider the historical context behind the passage. Scholars agree that the book of Numbers is the fourth book of the recordings known as the Pentateuch, or commonly known as the Law of Moses. The traditional approach to the formation of the original text has focused on the role of Moses as writer and editor of Torah. Recently R. K. Harrison has renewed the defense of the “probability that Moses wrote a significant amount of Numbers and supervised the editorial processes by which the bulk of the composition took shape.” Internal and external data have been proffered in support of this view. First, the writing activity of Moses is recounted in Numbers, 33:1–2 as well as in several other Pentateuchal passages.⁴ In addition, in the New Testament, Jesus, Stephen, and Paul refer to Moses role in the development of Pentateuchal law (John 5:45-47; Acts 26:22; Rom 10:5). These pieces of internal and external evidence suggest that Moses indeed wrote this volume. The Hebrew title for the book is *Bemidbar* or (In the Wilderness) possibly of Sinai.⁵ We get the English word *Numbers* from the Latin Vulgate which

⁴ R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, vol. 3B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 29.

⁵ David Malick, An Introduction to the Book of Numbers, accessed March 3, 2015, <https://bible.org/article/introduction-book-numbers>.

picked up on the Greek title (Arithmoi) and named the book Numeri, the English equivalent of Numbers.

Scholars believe if the authorship of Numbers is Mosaic of origination then, the book must date to the time of the exodus. The primary dates for the exodus are approximately 1440 BC or 1270 BC⁶. Numbers would have been written within forty years of one of these dates (the length of the wilderness wanderings)⁷

The book of Numbers is primarily a Historical narrative that includes a variety of literary genres. Within the book, you can find short poems (Num. 6:24-26; 10:35), long poems (Num. 23-18-24; 24:3-9), census lists (Num. 1-4, 26), itineraries (Num. 33:1-37), prescriptive ritual texts (Num. 19), descriptive ritual texts (Numbers 7), and cultic calendars (Num. 28-29). In addition to various genres, numbers are including various narrative genres.

Per Dennis Cole the Book of Numbers can be divided into the following four sections⁸:

- I. Faithfulness of Israel at Sinai (1:1-10:10)
- II. The Rebellious Generation of Israel (10:11-25:18)
- III. Preparation of the new Generation of Israel (26:1-30:16)
- IV. Preparation for War and Entry into the Promised Land (31:1-36:13)

⁶ Swann, J.T, "Numbers, Book of Introduction" . D. Barry, L. Wentz, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair-Wolcott, R. Klippenstein, D. Bomar, ... D. R. Brown (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁷ Swann, 30

⁸ Cole, R. Dennis, *The New American Commentary Volume 3b: Numbers*, (Nashville, TN, Broadman & Holman, 2000) p. 63.

The For the sake of this translation study, I will focus on the Preparation of the new Generation of Israel, where my periscope is found. How appropriate for the transference of leadership from Moses to Joshua be found in this section, as Israel is preparing themselves to enter into the Promised Land.

In the previous verses of this periscope, Moses is commanded to ascend Mount Nebo, in order to finish his work with the view of Canaan before his death. Here, he is reminded of his sin in the wilderness of Zin and that he would only view the Promised Land not enter it. Moses and Aaron were disqualified from entering the Promised Land because they had failed to honor the Lord by striking the rock at Meribah in the Desert of Zin (20:12). By this time, Aaron had already died (20:27-29), but the Lord allowed Moses a glimpse of Canaan from afar. It is interesting to note, that rather than Moses loathing in self-pity for his sin, Moses expresses genuine concern for Israel, and implores God that Israel needed someone “who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the assembly of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd”. Moses inquiry shows his meekness. He is not concerned with his own demise, or even the advancement of his own family, but he is concerned with God’s people. He addresses God as “the God of the Spirits of all Mankind”. This unusual title of God (occurring only here and in Num. 16:33) refers to God’s omniscient understanding of everyone and everything, and guarantees that God’s sovereign wisdom would choose a leader worthy of leading his people. The leader, Moses said, should be like a shepherd who would lead Israel, his sheep, out and ... in.⁹

⁹ Merrill, E. H. (1985). Numbers. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Pg. 249

The selection of a new leader to succeed an individual of the spiritual and charismatic character of Moses should come from among those of proven character and integrity. Few among Israel had the necessary elder status and demonstrated spiritual leadership quality. None but Joshua ben Nun and Caleb ben Jephunneh of the earlier generation had survived the desert sojourn, and so a choice from these two men who had given a good report of the land and implored Israel to advance by faith into the land was most appropriate¹⁰. Moses was plenty familiar with Joshua. For 40 years Joshua had served as his military captain, and Moses knew at some point Joshua succeed him. Moses did not place this important decision in the hands of his own intellect, or the power of selection to a group of elders. Rather he implored the almighty God to choose for Israel their successor. In response to Moses inquiry, God in verse 18 designates Joshua the son of Nun as the man whom He has chosen. Joshua according to God is a “man in whom is the Spirit”. The word Hebrew word translated “Spirit” denotes that Joshua is filled with God’s “insight and wisdom”. This parallels 34:9 “Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit (or Spirit) of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him.” (NIV). The lower-case rendering would imply a general spirit of leadership.

This commission of Joshua as the next leader was guided by Godly parameters. Moses was to take Joshua and lay his hands upon him, have him stand before Eleazar the Priest, and to present him publicly to the people, commissioning Joshua in their sight. By playing his hands-on Joshua, Moses was literally (transferring his official dignity). According to Cole “The conferring of command was accomplished by the laying on of the [right] hands, symbol of power and authority, in the people’s presence and under the

¹⁰ Cole, R. D. (2000). *Numbers* (Vol. 3B, p. 468). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

supervision of Eleazar, the high priest who was also Moses' nephew. A portion of Moses' authority was to be bestowed immediately so that the transition would be smooth, and the obedient consent of the people would be harmonious".¹¹ Unlike Moses, who had direct Access to God in seeking his will, Joshua's authority could be complemented by Eleazar the Priest. Moses then transferred his judicial office, but not his prophetic calling. Joshua was appointed the next leader of Israel, but was not appointed the next Prophet. That was reserved for God alone. Eleazar was a high-priest who administered Urim and Thummim, as a substitute for prophet decisions. Moses was elevating Joshua to his new office, however he did not part any of his own spiritual gifts into Joshua. As a result, Joshua whenever seeking guidance and wisdom from the Lord, was to "stand before Eleazar the Priest, who shall inquire for him, by the judgment of the Urim (and thummim), and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation".

What is clear in the text, is God will not leave his people as "sheep without shepherds", but indeed will provide the next generation of leadership to lead his people. Even though Moses, who was given the Law, which is a prominent theme throughout the book of Numbers, was able to bring the people to the border of the promised blessing that God promised them. It would not be Moses who would guide them into their promise, but rather Joshua. God in this text condemns the sin of Moses and as such Moses must deal with the consequences of his sin, however, the Israelites are not left without hope and redemption. The consecration of Joshua symbolizes new Hope and leadership for Israel into God's promises. God will show His displeasure against sin, even when in

¹¹ Cole, R. D. (2000). *Numbers* (Vol. 3B, p. 469). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

those who are nearest and dearest to Him as we see in the death of Moses. However, in this he does three things: 1. He leaves his people provided for. 2. He has the sight of the Promised Land. 3. His death is being gathered to his people. —A. G.J.¹²

We will see in next three passages, this reoccurring theme of God raising up a new generation of leadership, and transferring His Spirit/ Authority into them. Moses and Joshua spent considerable time together, and Moses in his old age, acknowledge that he would not lead God's people into the Promised Land. God in his infinite grace and wisdom would never leave his people without a Shepherd, someone who could guide them into the promise land and lead them through their conquest. He will never leave his people without Godly leadership, and He will never leave His people without His voice. This periscope is a great example of someone who is willing to 'let go' and let God have his divine and sovereign way. This passage serves as wonderful model for the church when it comes to identifying, developing, and commissioning the next generation to do ministry. When older Saints get to a place where they can no longer physically or spiritually continue in their roles or office, they should follow the Model of Moses, by first praying that God would raise up someone who can succeed them, develop their natural and spiritual gifts, and empower (commission) them to serve in ministry. But there is also the challenge of mature men and women who lead God's people, to model the life of faith for the next generation, instead of abdicating their leadership roles. Titus 2:3-5 encourages Mature woman to provide examples to spiritual daughters to follow. Yet when the older generations false to provide the proper example, and model it presents

¹² Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Lowrie, S. T., & Gosman, A. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Numbers* (p. 157), accessed February 10, 2015, Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software 5.

a great challenge to younger generations. Church leaders can learn from Moses modeling his faith walk to Joshua, which in turn provided a spiritual model for Joshua to follow.

Exegesis of Acts 16:1-5

- 1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,
- 2 and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.
- 3 Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.
- 4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.
- 5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

In Acts 9, we discovered Paul's conversion experience and how the Jerusalem Apostles received the news. By the time, we get to Acts 16, Paul has been widely accepted as an apostolic equal to the other Apostles, and has been traveling throughout the region ministering and planting churches. God used Paul to preach to the gentiles and from Acts 15:36-Acts 18:22, turns his attention to the Greek world. In the previous verses, he parts ways with Barnabas whom we wrote about earlier, after they could not come to agreement concerning Barnabas's desire to take John Mark. Paul did not think this was wise, because John mark had deserted them and had not shown much in

continuing the work. The writer records that the disagreement led to them parting ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas, and they continued through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

During their travels, Paul and Silas continue northward, through the Cilician Gates to the cities where he and Barnabas had established churches on their first mission. When they entered Lystra they encountered a disciple named Timothy, who was converted to Christianity during Paul and Barnabas first witness in the city of Derbe (Acts 14:20). Luke tells us that this young man named Timothy had a good reputation in the city of Lystra and that he was the product of a mixed marriage. He was the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, and a father who was Greek. It is worth noting why Luke includes this information about his parents. Timothy was the offspring of a mixed marriage, inasmuch his mother Eunice (1 Tim 1:5), was a Judeo-Christian, while his father was a *hellenos* or Greek. His mixed heritage would become an important factor for the decision to circumcise in verse 3. As Lange writes *“There is no indication whatever here found that the latter had embraced the Christian religion; it may, on the contrary, be inferred from the words: ὅτι Ἑλλήν ὑπῆρχεν, ver. 3, that he was still a pagan at that time, and that he had neither become a Jewish proselyte, nor been converted to Christ”*¹³. This mixed heritage of Timothy would have been the motivation for Paul to have him circumcised. Many scholars have argued that Paul would never have asked Timothy to be circumcised, since he adamantly opposed the ritual in Galatians. However, we must consider that Galatians was written to Gentiles whereas Timothy was considered a Jew. The Jerusalem council had already determined that it was not necessary for Gentiles to

¹³ John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Acts* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 298.

become circumcised in order to become Christians, and Jews would not be required to abandon their Jewish heritage in order to become Christians. With that said why would Paul want to force circumcision on anyone, let alone Timothy? Why would his mother who was Jew marry a Greek? Kenneth Gangel contends that likely because of the small size of the Jewish community in Lystra, a city the Greeks dominated. In Jewish law a child took the religion of its mother, but in Greek law the father dominated the home (2 Tim. 1:5). In addition, many scholars believe that Timothy's mother raised him as a single mother, and even the small Jewish community in Lystra would have considered an uncircumcised child of a Jewish mother an apostate¹⁴. Paul no doubt wanted to continue in his mission to Jews as well as Gentiles, and he could not do this without finding resolution with Timothy's unique predicament. We already know that Timothy was already a believer. This circumcision would have absolutely nothing to do with salvation, but it was a strategic move by Paul. Paul wanted to remove any uncertainty or stigma from the young man's status in the eyes of the Jewish community in Lystra. In a practical way, Paul's decision enabled and empowered Timothy to be an effective witness to both Jewish and Gentile communities. He would go on and become an invaluable asset to the missionary work the Apostle Paul started.

In verse 4 we see Paul's desire to take Timothy with him and Silas on their missionary journey. We observe that this was not Timothy's choosing, but it was Paul who called him to follow. In a sense, Timothy becomes Paul's apostolic delegate or representative. Paul had no missionary companion more actively involved in his work than Timothy. Paul considered in a 'son' (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2), and he wrote two

¹⁴ Lange, 298.

letters to him. He also listed Timothy as a co-sender in six other epistles (2 Cor1:1; Phil 1:1; Coll1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Phlm1). Paul considered Timothy his “fellow worker” (Roman 16:21). This group would continue going throughout the cities of the region delivering the decrees that is the decisions, which had been reached by the apostles and the elders at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:2). Luke did not specify the towns they visited, but one would assume they were Iconium and Pisidian Antioch and any other villages where there may have been a Christian community resulting from the first missionary tour.¹⁵ Luke ends Act 4 in his history by stating again the health of the church in general and particularly the churches of Asia Minor which were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. Quite abruptly Luke’s primary purpose for the second journey concludes. In 15:36, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing. That effort receives five verses, most of which are given to the specific discussion of Timothy. Paul had a plan, but God changed it to redirect the force of the gospel.¹⁶

Conclusion

The purpose of this document was to examine and exegete one Old Testament and one New Testament periscopes that will serve as a biblical foundation for the Doctorate of Ministry project. In doing so, we identified two passages that serve as biblical models

¹⁵ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 343.

¹⁶ Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 267–268.

that support God instituting a succession plan to continuously train up the next generation of leadership, the next generations of the prophetic office, or the next generation of Apostolic succession. In each passage, it was we examined models where someone who was older mentored and developed someone younger with the intent of carrying on God's purpose for His people and His ministry. No matter the background, ethnic group (as in the case of Timothy), God is able to call and utilize whomever he wants to carry forth ministry.

The idea of succession and bridging the gaps between Baby Boomer worshippers and millennial worshippers must begin with the thought that God always has a succession plan to continue his redemptive work in the world. When we realize that we are not the owners of the work, but the stewards of the work, then we can be like Moses as he mentored Joshua and Paul as he mentored Timothy. When churches embrace the inevitable, that we have a short while on this earth, to do the work of the Lord. At some point, someone will take our place in the work. However, we must be willing to participate in the embracing of succession and prepare both ourselves to transition on, and the next generation to carry the torch.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

On April 10, 2014, noted Author and Professor of Religious Philosophy and Christian Practice at the Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Cornell West, in conjunction with Harvard Black Men's Forum group and Harvard University, presented an intellectual stimulating lecture in which he addressed, expounded, and discussed four questions that W.E.B DuBois raised in 1957, when he published the first of three novels in the *Black Flame* trilogy. In the first novel of the Trilogy: *The Ordeal of Mansart* DuBois raised the following questions:

1. How does integrity face oppression?
2. What does honesty do in the face of deception?
3. What does decency do in the face of insult?
4. And how does virtue meet brute force?¹

These questions posed by DuBois, have for years racked the minds of leaders, thinkers, and scholars. Dr. West even alludes to the fact that DuBois did not have a complete and satisfactory answer to them, but they are questions designed to stimulate our thinking and to prick our moral compass. He went on to state that “integrity, honesty, decency and virtue-must never be reduced to market value, but that, that that we should in many ways examine life and the lives of others.

¹ W.E.B Dubose, *The Black Flame Trilogy: Book One, The Ordeal of Mansart*, Kraus International, June 1976

Before addressing these questions, Dr. West began his lecture, by sharing his upbringing. Dr. West was born on June 2, 1953 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, but was raised in Sacramento, California. He talked about the love, morals, and values that were instilled into him at an early age by his parents Irene and Clifton West (a Baptist minister) and his grandfather Rev. C.L West, and his church community, while growing up in an area of Sacramento that was predominately African-American. Dr. West proudly discussed his upbringing, mentioning how integrity, honesty, decency, and virtue were the values instilled into him, that would help prepare him to matriculate through Harvard University, and earn a Bachelor's degree in 1973, and a Ph.D. from Princeton University, becoming the first African American to graduate from the university with a Ph.D. in philosophy. One of the stories shared that resonated with me, when Dr. West father dropped him off on the campus of Harvard University in the fall of 1970 and said to him "son, you shape this place in your image and your best, and allow yourself to be shaped by Harvard's image and it's best, so that the learning and walk is mutually beneficial". It is clear to me, that values, morals, and ideas from Dr. West upbringing helped to prepare him for the rigorous academic road that he would travel upon, and that these values continue to be intricate in his life and his work.

It is safe to assume, that our experiences, values instilled, and family influences help to shape who we are and help blaze the trail on who we will become. This chapter will explore the life of W.E.B DuBois, a man who became one of the most influential scholars, the world has ever known. Not only was he the leader of the New Negro movement, but his writings influenced generations of scholars, authors, leaders, and movements. The influence of his writings can be seen in movements such as the Student

Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party, the Civil Rights movement, and his writings have been used in curriculums in high school and at the university levels. There is power in rallying generations through the power of prophetic pen and sharing of ideas.

Early Beginnings

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on February 23, 1868 to Mary Silvina Burghardt, a domestic worker, and Alfred DuBois, a barber and itinerant laborer in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. For the most part W.E.B DuBois had a happy childhood upbringing, until one day, as he records in *Souls of Black Folk*, a student in his class refused to exchange greeting cards with him simply because he was black.² He states “the exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,--refused it peremptorily, with a glance”. From that moment on DuBois writes, he knew that he was different from others. Here was a young kid who “lived above common contempt in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows, whose sky was bluest when he could beat his mates at examination time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads”³. Throughout DuBois life he was made to feel that he was both American and African, but lived in a world which afforded him no true self-consciousness, but rather a double-consciousness, an American, a Negro; two souls,

² Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folks*, New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1994, pg. 2.

³ Du Bois, 3.

two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body⁴. DuBois spent his entire childhood in Barrington a town that probably had a very small African American population, however DuBois received a classical, college preparatory education in Great Barrington's racially integrated high school, and in June 1884 became the first African-American graduate. Now only did he become the first African-American graduate but he contributed numerous articles to two regional newspapers, the Springfield Republican and the black-owned New York Globe.⁵

After graduating from High school, DuBois enrolled at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1885. With the support of four Congregational churches in Great Barrington Mass, (each pledging \$25 dollars a year to cover the tuition, DuBois was able to enroll and become a productive student at Fisk University. Despite his disappointment in having to defer his dream of attending Harvard University, DuBois was not unhappy traveling south. His friends and family however did not share this in his excitement. According to DuBois, he enrolled as a sophomore and graduated in June of 1888. In total, he spent 4 years at Fisk, two years in the College and two years in the Graduated Department. Fisk offered DuBois, a continuation of his classical education and strong influence of teachers who were influenced by abolitionism. He says in his autobiography: *"I go down to Fisk University and suddenly I am in a Negro world where all the people except the teachers (and the teachers in their thought and action) belong to this colored world and the world was almost complete. I mean, we acted and thought as*

⁴ Du Bois, 4.

⁵Thomas C. Holt. "Du Bois, W. E. B."; <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00191.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Wed July 24, 2015.

*people belonging to this group. And I got the idea that my word was in that group.”*⁶ In addition, DuBois, who was raised in Massachusetts, was also introduced to southern American racism and African-American culture.⁷ This exposure to abolitionist faculty and to southern American racism would be expressed later in his writings and thought. After teaching in African American schools in the rural surrounding areas of Nashville, he enrolled at Harvard University as a junior, earning a Bachelor of Arts (cum laude) in 1890.

Harvard University afforded DuBois the opportunity to understand his unusual position as an intellectual Negro. He makes it clear that when he went to Harvard as a Negro, not simply by birth, but recognizing himself as a member of a segregated caste whose situation he accepted”⁸. DuBois did not attend Harvard for the social experience. He makes it clear that he had not heard of Phi Beta Kappa, or such social organizations as the Hasty Pudding Club, but that he was at Harvard for “education and not for high marks, except as marks would insure my staying’. He was determined to study Philosophy. He admits that his years at Harvard where the “continuing of my college training. I did not find better teachers at Harvard but teachers better known, which had wider facilities for gaining knowledge and had a broader atmosphere for approaching truth”⁹

⁶ Transcribed from “W.E.B. DuBois: A Recorded Autobiography; Interview with Moses Asch”, 1961, Folkway Records, Album No. FD5511.

⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois: A Recorded Autobiography

⁸ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*. New York, NY: International Publishers Co. Inc., 1968, pp. 132-153.

⁹ Du Bois, 134.

DuBois, did express that for the most part he was happy at Harvard. In his autobiography, he does recall the prejudices that he endured on the campus of Harvard.

One of the instances is as follows:

“Following the attitudes which I had adopted in the South, I sought no friendships among my white fellow students, nor even acquaintanceships. Of course I wanted friends, but I could not seek them. My class was large, with some 300 students. I doubt if I knew a dozen of them. I did not seek them, and naturally they did not seek me. I made no attempt to contribute to the college periodicals, since the editors were not interested in my major interests. Only one organization did I try to enter, and I ought to have known better than to make this attempt. But I did have a good singing voice and loved music, so I entered the competition for the Glee Club I ought to have known that Harvard could not afford to have a Negro on its Glee Club traveling about the country. Quite naturally I was rejected.”¹⁰

In 1890, Harvard awarded Du Bois his second bachelor's degree, *cum laude*, in history. In 1891, Du Bois received a scholarship to attend the sociology graduate school at Harvard. In 1892, Du Bois received a fellowship from the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen to attend the University of Berlin for graduate work. While a student in Berlin, he traveled extensively throughout Europe and began studying with some of Germany's most prominent social scientists, including Gustav von Schmoller, Adolph Wagner and Heinrich von Treitschke. After returning from Europe, Du Bois completed his graduate studies; in 1895 he was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. In addition, he was one of six commencement speakers¹¹. He later obtained a Doctorate in History in 1895, from Harvard University.

¹⁰ W.E.B DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*. New York, NY: International Publishers Co. Inc., 1968, pp. 132-153.

¹¹ Author unknown <http://www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history-w.e.b.-dubois> accessed July 24, 2015.

Social Consciousness

In 1894 DuBois, began to teach at Wilberforce University in Ohio, where he met Nina Gomer, a student at the college. He married her in 1890, and the two of them had two children; Burghardt, who was born in 1897 and died in 1899, and Yolande (1901-1960).¹² It was while teaching at Wilberforce that Dubois completed his doctoral work at Harvard University. His dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870*, was published as no. 1 in the Harvard Historical Series¹³, and continues to this day to be a major scholarly contribution to the scientific study of the slavery and the American Negro. In 1896, Dubois was invited to the University of Pennsylvania to conduct a social study of African Americans in the seventh ward in Philadelphia. It is reported that after an estimated 835 hours of door-to-door interviews in 2,500 households, DuBois completed his sociological study of an urban community and published *The Philadelphia Negro* in 1899. This body of work along with *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America* solidified DuBois's place as one of the leading scholars in America during his time.

In 1897, Dubois took a position working at Atlanta University, where during his tenure he continued to conduct extensive studies of the social conditions of blacks in America. This information garnered the attention of a Boston-based periodical, *The Writer*. Here the writer says this:

"Dr. William E. Burghardt Du Bois, whose paper, "Strivings of the American Negro," [sic] in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August has attracted wide attention, has recently been elected assistant professor of history and economics in Atlanta University, and is one of the best trained of the younger men who are devoting

¹² Robert W. McDonnell. *The Papers of W.E.B DuBois A Guide*, Microfilming Corporation of America, 1981, pg. 8.

¹³ McDonnell, 8.

themselves to the uplifting of their race. Born in Massachusetts, a graduate of Fisk University, and having also a bachelor's degree from Harvard College, he has devoted himself for several years to advanced study in the graduate department of Harvard University and in the leading universities of Europe. He received the degree of doctor of philosophy from Harvard. His work everywhere received marked attention, and his publications, including a large volume in the Harvard Historical Series on "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade," and various contributions to periodical literature, have all won high praise. During the past year Dr. Du Bois has been assistant in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, and has had charge of an investigation by the University of the Condition of the negro population of the seventh ward in the city of Philadelphia. He has thus been brought into personal contact with many of the most practical sides of the negro question."¹⁴

It was during his tenure in Atlanta, that DuBois produced the classic writing, *The Souls of Black Folk*, a collection of essays on race, labor, and culture, who as DuBois states "if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line"¹⁵. With this writing, DuBois was brought to national attention and help to the growing estrangement in the Afro-American community between the accommodations theories of Booker T. Washing and DuBois insistence that Negroes should demand and receive fully equal treatment. ¹⁶ In fact, with this volume of work, DuBois charged that Washington's strategy kept the black man down rather than freeing him. This attach crystallized the opposition to Booker T. Washington among many black intellectuals, polarizing the leaders of the black community into two wings—the "conservative" supporters of

¹⁴ Anonymous. 1897. "Writers of the Day -- Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois." *The Writer*, Vol. X, No. 11 (November):167, google books
https://books.google.com/books?id=FEqS1zKJIe4C&pg=PA167&as_brr=1&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false

¹⁵ Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folks*, New York, NY; Dover Publications, 1994, pg. 1.

¹⁶ Robert W. McDonnell. *The Papers of W.E.B DuBois A Guide*, Microfilming Corporation of America, 1981, pg. 8.

Washington and his “radical” critics. In an interview of DuBois in November 1965, in the *Atlantic Monthly* by Ralph McGill, DuBois had this to say about his rivalry with Booker

T. Washington:

“I never thought Washington was a bad man,” he said. “I believed him to be sincere, though wrong. He and I came from different backgrounds. I was born free. Washington was born slave. He felt the lash of an overseer across his back. I was born in Massachusetts, he on a slave plantation in the South. My great-grandfather fought with the Colonial Army in New England in the American Revolution.” (This earned the grandfather his freedom.) “I had a happy childhood and acceptance in the community. Washington’s childhood was hard. I had many more advantages: Fisk University, Harvard, graduate years in Europe. Washington had little formal schooling. I admired much about him. Washington,” he said, a smile softening the severe, gaunt lines of his face, “died in 1915. A lot of people think I died at the same time.”

“The controversy,” he said, “developed more between our followers than between us. It is my opinion that Washington died a sad and disillusioned man who felt he had been betrayed by white America. I don’t know that, but I believe it. In the early years I did not dissent entirely from Washington’s program. I was sure that out of his own background he saw the Negro’s problem from its lowest economic level. He never really repudiated the higher ends of justice which were then denied.

“As Washington began to attain stature as leader of his new, small, and struggling school at Tuskegee,” DuBois continued, “he gave total emphasis to economic progress through industrial and vocational education. He believed that if the Negro could be taught skills and find jobs, and if others could become small landowners, a yeoman class would develop that would, in time, be recognized as worthy of what already was their civil rights, and that they would then be fully accepted as citizens. So he appealed to moderation, and he publicly postponed attainment of political rights and accepted the system of segregation.”¹⁷

In 1905 DuBois, joined John Hope, Monroe Trotter and twenty-seven others in a secret meeting in the home of Mary B. Talbert, a prominent member of Buffalo’s Michigan Street Baptist Church, to adopt resolutions which lead to the founding of the Niagara Movement, an organization who advocated for full civil and political rights for African Americans, and although the group never achieved large membership, it did pave

¹⁷ Ralph McGill, *The Atlantic Monthly*; November 1965; W.E.B. Du Bois; Volume 216, No. 5; pages 78-81.

the way for the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) which was based upon similar principles and was interracial in character.¹⁸

In 1909 DuBois was among the founders of the NAACP. This movement grew out of the tension and agitation of escalating violence against black Americans. Unfortunately, due to lack of funds and opposition of Washington and his allies, the Niagara movement was hampered, but gave way to a new Bi-racial organization called the NAACP, after racial rioting erupted in August 1908 in Springfield, Illinois sparked widespread protest among blacks and liberal whites. The NAACP represented a clear opposition to Booker T. Washington's policies of accommodation. The NAACP launched legal suits, legislative lobbying, and campaigns that embodied uncompromising, militant attacks on lynching, Jim Crow, and disfranchisement.¹⁹ In 1910 DuBois left Atlanta to join the NAACP as an officer, its only black board member, and became the editor of the *Crisis*, a monthly publication of the entrenched in the fight for African-American equality. The *Crisis* presented a platform in which DuBois could now reach a larger audience among African Americans. It was in these journals that DuBois was able to rally black support for NAACP policies and programs and to criticize and agitate white Americans who opposed equal rights, as well as open discussion of race relations, black culture, black religion, and poetry. These journals embodied the diversity and presence of black culture in America, inspiring black intellectualism and pride all over the land. DuBois' articles and editorials in the *Crisis*, solidified his position as a major spokesman

¹⁸ McGill, 78.

¹⁹ Thomas C. Holt. "Du Bois, W. E. B."; <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00191.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Wed July 24, 2015.

for African American rights. While writing for the *Crisis*, he would also continue to write for the popular press and published several more books during these years, including *The Negro* (1915), *Darkwater* (1920), *The Gift of Black Folk* (1924), and the novels *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911) and *Dark Princess* (1928).

The NAACP and DuBois both insisted on the full integration of Blacks into the mainstream of American life. With the onset of the Great Depression in the late 1920s, DuBois began to modify this position to the extent of calling for a Black Nationalist strategy, with Black-controlled cooperatives and institutions, as a means of black survival. These ideas eventually led to disagreement within the NAACP which led to the resignation of DuBois from the editorship of the *Crisis* and from the Association in 1934.

DuBois in the early decades of the twentieth century began to extend his interest in blacks beyond the borders of the United States of America, into the global arena. He became quite active on behalf of pan-Africanism and the concerns of persons of African descent no matter where they lived, and in 1900 he attended the First Pan-African conference held in London, and was eventually selected to serve as its vice president. Pan Africanist ideals emerged in the late nineteenth century mainly in response to European colonization and exploitation of the African continent. Its philosophy held that slavery and colonialism depended on and encouraged negative, categorizations of the race, culture, and values of African people²⁰. While serving in this position DuBois, organized a Pan-African department for the Niagara Movement, and attended the First Universal Races Congress in London along with Black intellectuals from Africa and the

²⁰ Saheed A. Adejumo, "The Pan-African Congress," in *Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations*, Nina Baym, ed. (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2001).

West Indies, with the intent of improving conditions of living for persons of African descent globally. Out of this meeting two committees were formed. One group, chaired by DuBois, drafted an address entitled *to the Nations of the World*, demanding moderate reforms for colonial Africa. In the address the United States and other imperial European nations were implored to “acknowledge and protect the rights of people of African descent” and to respect the integrity and independence of “the free Negro States of Abyssinia, Liberia, Haiti, etc.” The address was then signed by DuBois as chairman as well as President Bishop Alexander Walters²¹. This address was given to close out the first Pan African Convention on July 25, 1900.

After WWI in 1919, DuBois worked to revive the Pan –African congresses. Following the war, European, and American leaders gathered for a peace conference in Versailles, France. DuBois attended the conference as a special representative of the NAACP, and appealed to President Woodrow Wilson in a letter urging the United States Government to initiate a comprehensive study of the treatment of black soldiers. In addition, DuBois expressed a hope that the peace treaty would address the “the future of Africa”. As a result of DuBois written appeal, President Wilson released a Fourteen Point memorandum, which suggested the formation of a League of Nations and called for “an absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based on the principle that the interest of the population must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government.”²²

²¹ Alexander Walters, *My Life and Work* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1917) 257-260.

²² Walters, 258.

DuBois would continue to organize a series of Pan-African congresses around the world, in 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1927. The delegations that made up these congresses were intellectuals from Africa, the West Indies, and the United states. Through various resolutions condemning colonialism and calling for alleviation of the oppression of Africans was passed, there was concrete action that was taken. The Fifth congress (in 1945, Manchester, England) elected DuBois as its chairpersons, however there were other activists, who would garner wider influence and support. DuBois final Pan-African gesture was to move to Ghana and take up citizenship in 1961 at the request of President Kwame Nkrumah and to begin work as the director of the Encyclopedia Africana. DuBois spent the remainder of his life residing in Ghana, an expatriate from the United States, working on the Encyclopedia Africana. In the final years of his life, he renounced his U.S citizenship and became a citizen of Ghana. In 1961, at the age of 93, he became a member of the communist party, and believed that the party embodied the solution for blacks and poor white people. He died on August 27, 1963 in Accra, Ghana.

DuBois Significance Today

It is clear based, on a brief overview and observation of W.E.B Dubois life's work, scholarship, and contribution to American scholarship and literature, that his even after his death, his legacy still demands our attention. In his twilight years, Dubois at the age of 89, decided to write a trilogy of novels that would address race before he died. DuBois was keen about passing on ideas to the younger generation, and in his effort, he would write the first of three novels. The first question came from the novel *The Ordeal of Manzark*, and asked, "How does integrity face oppression?" The second

one asks, “What does honest do in the face of deception?” DuBois’ third query was “What does decency do in the face of insult?” and the last question was, “How does virtue meet brute force?” It is these questions that Dr. West has built lectures, and has given thought provoking lectures surrounding these questions, and how they are relevant to the shaping of minds regarding the context in which we live.

With the first two queries posed by DuBois, “What does integrity do in the face of Oppression” and “What does honesty do in the face of deception”, West argues that just by aspiring to maintain integrity and honesty will make a person counter-cultural, especially in a market driven society obsessed with the ‘eleventh commandment, “Though shall not get caught.” This is especially difficult in a highly commodified society that bombards each and every one of us, but especially our young people, with weapons of “mass distraction.” For Dubois, integrity and honesty are critical, because integrity and honesty will keep us honest in looking at the social ills at hand. The truth of the matter is even though young people today are bombarded with various distractions in the media, maintaining integrity and honesty, will speak volumes on how we discern and prioritize the issues that we face and choose to take on.

In the third query, “What does decency do in the face of insult”, West asks “how are you going to deal with attacks, assaults, and insults? Can we hold on to our decency when standing on integrity and honesty? Can we hold on to our decency, when media outlets and news pundits seek to devalue or discredit those who stand for what is right. He argues that “something’s got to sustain you inside, and you’ve got to fall back on tradition, memories, fall back on unbelievable courage, we’ve got to be able to “from the womb to the tomb” be willing to remain decent.

And lastly, “What does virtue do in the face of brute force? For us in America, this is a very important question to wrestle with, because we talk a lot about race relations, yet in every instance of attempts to bring racial, and social issues to the forefront have been met with some type of resistance. How then are we to utilize history, and the events in movements to empower us to be and remain virtuous while facing opposition?

A little over one hundred and five years ago, W.E.B Dubois prophesied that the problem with the 20th century is the problem of the color line. Given the current state of our American context in this 21st century, we can make the same argument that color line is still a problem today. We are currently living in an America that is still dealing with challenges and issues of race relations, police brutality and economic oppression, issues that W.E.B Dubois wrestled with even while growing up in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Racism in this country has been exposed in the police killings of black men, that now is being captured on our mobile devices, and political pundits who continue to try to silence or circumvent dealing with these social issues. West says this of Dubois “W.E.B DuBois is the towering black scholar of the twentieth century. The scope of his interests, the depth of his insights, and the sheer majesty of his prolific writings bespeak a level of genius unequaled among modern black intellectuals. Yet, like all of us, DuBois was a child of his age, shaped by the prevailing presuppositions and prejudices of modern Euro-American civilization. And despite his lifelong struggle—marked by great courage and sacrifice—against white supremacy and for the advancement of Africans around the world, he was, in style and substance, a proud black man of letters primarily influenced

by nineteenth-century Euro-American traditions.”²³ We cannot deny that we are still dealing with racial prejudice and economic oppression, marred by the problem of the color line.

²³ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Cornel West, *The Future of the Race*, Knowof Doubleday Publishing Group, New York, NY: 1996.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

There is a Nigerian proverb that says “It takes a village to raise a child”, which has been shared and exists in various forms in many African languages. The basic meaning behind this proverb highlights the communal efforts it takes for a village to raise children. In this village, every member of the family participates and plays a vital role in the development of the children. From older children, aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins, and even extended family, the goal is to work together to emphasize the values of family relationships, parental care, sharing, hospitality and respect. Even Hillary Clinton, wrote a book entitled *It Takes A Village*, where she explores, characterizes and asserts that some of the conditions of the village are capable of raising children in a positive environment. She accurately insists that no family is an island insisting that “the society is our context; we do not exist in a vacuum.”¹ Dr. Marva Mitchells further expounds on this village concept and how it applies to the church in her book, *It Takes a Church To Raise a Village*. In her introduction, she states that “the village provided leadership founded in integrity and exercised with moral character”². As a result, the

¹ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 32.

² Marva Mitchell, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Village* (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 2001), xix.

child and those who participated in rearing the child, developed a way of life, based on established morals, understanding of societal roles, and on mutual respect.

It is true, that this African proverb teaches us that no man, woman, or family is an island, and that we must learn to rely on each other to form community. Unfortunately, in many of our churches, particularly over the last couple of generations, we have witnessed a steady decline of this expected way of life in our precious villages (the church). Instead of forming church community, we find persons who are alienated from participating in ministries. We find entertainers and sports figures emerging as heroes to our kids, rather than the local Deacon, church missionary, or even Pastor/Preacher. Lastly, we find what seems to be a disconnect in language, culture, music, between different generations, which may lead to feelings of disrespect and misunderstandings in the village which could if not address, have the potential to create gaps. Generational gaps can be defined as: a lack of communication between one generation and another, especially between young people and their parents, brought about by differences of taste, values, outlook, culture, etc.

The research of this document will explore the theological themes of the Church (ecclesiology), to determine the relevance of developing a practical model to address the issue of creating a bridge that will help bridge the gaps of generations in our ministry context from thru the lenses of biblical theology.

Ecclesiology-The Theology of the Church

Beneatha: "Mama, you don't understand. It's all a matter of ideas and God is just one idea I don't accept... there is simply no blasted God-there is only man and it is he who makes miracles!"
(Mama slaps Beneatha powerfully across her face.)

*Mama: “now –you say after me, in my mothers house there is still God. (Pause)
In my mother’s house there is still God.”
Beneatha: “In my mother’s house there is still God.”*³

In this powerful and poignant scene exist confrontation between a mother and her daughter regarding God’s existence. This narrative in Lorraine Hansberry’s classic work, *A Raisin in the Sun*, effectively summarize the concerns of relationships between younger persons (millennials) and baby boomer generations. In the theological master piece, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, Lincoln and Mumiya, dedicate an entire chapter to explore concerns of the Black Church and young people. In the chapter, they begin with utilizing this same narrative in *Raisin in the Sun*, to highlight the fact that many Black parents, like Mama and her husband, have usually tried to raise their children properly by taking them to church every Sunday. But like Beneatha, many young African Americans, teenagers, and young adults, have increasingly questioned the need for God and the relevance of the Black Church in their own lives.⁴ How then does the church become the common ground platform that we can use to bridge the generational gap and create a collaborative intergenerational worship experience? Do the relationships formed between generations, reflect the relationship nature of God? What does God say about the relationships between generations in scripture? Perhaps we can address these questions through the lenses of theology of the Church.

Milliard J. Erickson, in his book *Christian Theology*, 2nd edition says “the church is one of the few visible forms of a corporate relationship among believers. It is best

³ Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 39.

⁴ C Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 309.

defined by the biblical-philological method.”⁵ The bible employs various images to describe the church. She is known as the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and as the Bride of Jesus. Each one of these descriptions of the church is visibly expressed by their relationship with one another. The Christian life then is not a solitary experience. Typically, in the Book of Acts, we find that conversion often lead the individual into the fellowship of a group of believers. That collective dimension of the Christian life is what we call the church.

It is important that we place consideration on the question “What is the church?” We in contemporary western culture use the term to describe the building and or architecture of a building. We can also use the term to refer to a particular body of believers that make up a particular body of believers i.e. they belong to the First Baptist Church. Other times, we may use the word church to refer to a particular denomination, a group set apart by some distinctive. And while all of these descriptions of the church share insight on a particular aspect of the church, they all fall short of capturing the basic nature of the church.

In order to try to capture the biblical understanding of the term church, we must understand it in light of the New Testament Greek term *ekklesia*. While this is a common word in the New Testament, its occurrences are unevenly distributed throughout the New Testament. In the English New Testament, the word “church” is used invariably to translate the Greek word *ekklesia* in the following passages: (Mt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:47; 9:31; 13:1; 14:23; 15:22; 16:5; 20:17, 28; Rom. 16:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 5:23–29; Col.

⁵ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1998), 1035.

1:18; Rv. 1:4, 11). The word *ekklesia* means “an assembly of people” and is a term derived from two Greek words, *ek* meaning “out from,” and *kaleo* which means “to call.” Originally, “the ones called out” had reference to the legislative body of citizens of the Greek republic called from their communities to serve the country. When we refer to a session of the State “Assembly,” we are using the word “assembly” in exactly the same way the Greeks used the term *ekklesia*.⁶

Jesus first uses the term *ekklesia* in Matthew 16:18 when he is talking to the disciple Peter. He says to Peter “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it”. It was after Peter and the disciples recognized Jesus publicly as their Lord, and they accepted his teachings. It was the *ekklesia* established by the Lord himself. Later as the Apostle Paul established churches in various locations, they were also referred to as *ekklesiai*, since they were manifestations of the one universal Church of Christ. We should bear in mind however, that the names “Church,” “Kerk” and “Kirch” are not derived from the word *ekklesia*, but from the word *kuriake*, which means “belonging to the Lord.”⁷ Paul and the early church understood that the Church belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why Paul could encourage the elder Saints at Ephesus in Acts: 20:28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which HE purchased with His own blood.”⁸

⁶Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, [rev. ed. (Los Angeles, CA.: Foursquare Media, 2008), 420.

⁷ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998, 1958), 557.

⁸ New American Standard Bible translation.

As stated earlier, the bible describes the church using various imagery. Some of these descriptions are the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple where the Holy Spirit dwells, and the bridegroom of the Christ. All of these images are presented and utilized by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. For the consideration of this document, two of these images will be explored: 1. The Body of Christ and 2. The Temple where the Holy Spirit Dwells. Lastly, we will explore the ordinances of the New Testament and Protestant view of the ordinances of the church.

First, the Church is often described as the body of Christ. Normally in churches, we hear preachers preach and teach that Jesus is the head of the church, and we (those who are professed believers in the Lord Jesus) make up the body of Christ. Erickson notes that this image emphasizes that the church is the focus of Christ activity now, just it was during his earthly ministry.⁹ In addition, Paul writes in Colossians 1:18, that Christ is the head of this body of which believers are individual members or parts. This image is parallel to the image Jesus used to describe himself when he described himself as the vine to which believers, as the branches are connected (John 15:1-11). This image of the body of Christ, is further made clear to us by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church of Corinth. In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, Paul portrays a picture of the human body that speaks to the interconnectedness between all persons who make up the church. In this text, Paul highlights how dependent is upon on another, emphasizing that "through all its parts are many, they form one body (v.12). All of them rather Jew or Greek, have been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and have been made to drink of one Spirit (v.

⁹⁹ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1998), 1047.

13). Each member of the body has a certain gift (function) and are mutually dependent on the other. The body of Christ is a unified body characterized by genuine fellowship, encouragement, and empathy. This is why Paul writes “if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). The body is to be a unified body. The body of Christ is universal. All barriers have been removed by Him. This is what Paul alludes to when he writes, “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (Col 3:11). Not only is the body of Christ universal (in the sense of the universal church), but this is also translated to the local church. The local church is made up of members, who have been given gifts and who are mutually dependent on one another. These spiritual gifts are special attributes given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God’s grace. When persons in the local church utilize their gifts in the local assembly and work together, the church is able to meet the local needs of her parishioners, and the community in which they live and serve.

Secondly, the church is described as the Temple or Dwelling space of the Holy Spirit. Paul refers to the church of Corinth as “a temple of God” where the Holy Spirit dwells in 1 Cor. 3:16. In Ephesians 2:21, 22, Paul speaks of believers as growing into ‘a holy temple in the Lord,’ and as being built together for “a habitation of God in the Spirit. This same Spirit that fills the temple and that believers are being built together for habitation is the same Spirit who brought the church into being at Pentecost. It was the Spirit that gave birth to the church. It was at Pentecost that Jews, Greeks, slaves and free, were “baptized by one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). Lastly, Peter says that believers as living stones are built up “a spiritual house,” (1 Peter 2:5). The connection

shown in all of these passages is that the Church is holy and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit imparts to her an exalted character”¹⁰ This dwelling of the Holy Spirit within the church, produces special qualities of the members that make her up. We speak of these qualities, that the Holy Spirit imparts as the “fruit of the Spirit”. Gal 5:22-23, describes these fruits found in the church as: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The presence of these qualities are indicative of the presence, power, and activity of the Holy Spirit, and thus create an authentic church. In addition, the Holy Spirit is what gives the church power. As Jesus indicated in Acts 1:8 to his disciples” But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, bestowed *dunamis* power. This greek word *dunamis*, (where we get the English wordy dynamite), in order to carry out the incredible promise that he gave them, that they would do even greater works than he had done (John 14:12). Thus Jesus told them, “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you “(John 16:7). Jesus promising the disciples both power and that they would be His witness, further underscores that the Holy Spirit indeed takes dwelling in the believer and empowers them to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Up until this point, we have discussed the church as being the Body of Christ, and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Our last point of discussion for this conversation regarding exploring “what is the church”, is looking at the Holy ordinances of the New Testament Church through the Protestant view. It’s important to distinguish the

¹⁰ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998, 1958), 557.

ordinances of the church from Roman Catholicism and the Protestant church. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes seven ordinances of the church which are: ordination, confirmation, matrimony, extreme unction, penance, baptism, and the Eucharist. The New Testament and Protestant view is that there are only two: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism was commanded by our Lord and is of perpetual obligation for the church. All Christian churches perform the rite of baptism and they do so in part because Jesus in his final commission commanded the Apostles and the church to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"(Matthew 28:19). It is almost universally agreed upon in the church that baptism is connected with the beginning of the Christian life, initiating the individual into the invisible universal church, as well as the local visible church. It is important to note, that when Jesus is referring to baptism, he is indeed referring to baptism by immersion. Theologian James Nichols says this. "There is only one correct mode of baptism—immersion. This is shown from the Greek word for baptize and from such passages as the following: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).¹¹ Baptism then is a symbolic expression, an outward symbol indicating an inward change that has been effected in the believer. It serves as a public testimony of one's faith in Jesus Christ. It is an initiatory

¹¹ James A. Nichols, *Christian Doctrines a Presentation of Biblical Theology*, 1st ed. (Craing Press, 1970), 208.

rite—we are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ.¹² Christ commanded the act of baptism, and since it was ordained by him, understanding the significance of it goes without saying. As Augustus Strong says “The act of baptism conveys no direct spiritual benefit or blessing. In particular, we are not regenerated through baptism, for baptism presupposes faith and the salvation to which faith leads. It is, then, a testimony that one has already been regenerated. If there is a spiritual benefit, it is the fact that baptism brings us into membership or participation in the local church.”¹³ Baptism is not a matter to be taken lightly. It is of great importance, for it is both a sign of the believers’ union with Christ, and as a confession of that union, and act of faith that serves to cement the more firmly the relationship of the individual into the church.

The second ordinance of the Protestant church is the act of communion. Like baptism, the Lord’s supper is vital to all Christian believers. It continues what baptism began in initiating one into the Christian Faith and reaffirms our familial, communal connectivity to one another and with Jesus Christ himself. Just as baptism was instituted by Christ, the act of communion was established by the Lord as well. All three synoptic Gospels attribute that Jesus instituted this practice for the purpose of remembering the redemptive work done on the cross, and to bring together the fellowship of the believers. In 1 Corinthians 11:17-29, Paul writes to the Saints in Corinth concerning strife that existed within the church. He heard that when they came together as a church, that there were divisions among them. He further exclaimed that some would eat without waiting on others, some remained hungry, while others got drunk. He encouraged them to

¹² Edward T. Hiscox, *The New Directory for Baptist Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1894), 121.

¹³ Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Westwood, NJ, : Revell, 1907), 945.

examine their hearts before eating of the bread and drinking from the cup of communion. He concludes the chapter with an encouraging word in verse 33 “So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgement”. It is widely accepted in Christian churches that the Lord’s Supper is representational of the fact and meaning of Christ death and submission to death on the cross. Paul indicated that the Lord’s Supper is a form of proclamation: “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26). As Erikson notes, “The act of taking the bread and the cup is a dramatization of the gospel, a graphic display of what Christ’s death has accomplished. It points backward to his death as the basis of our salvation. More than that, however, it also declares a present truth-the importance of a proper frame of mind and heart.”¹⁴

The partaking of communion then in the local church, brings her members together, in fellowship, remembrance, and the breaking of bread together. For Paul communion not only reinforced our common union with Christ, but reinforces our common union with one another.

Theological relevance of the subject and project

Now that we have considered what the church is through the lenses of theology, we must consider the information presented, and how it’s related to the issue of bridging

¹⁴ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1998), 1119.

generational gaps within our local context. The Mount Moriah Baptist Church located in Brockton, Massachusetts currently has a membership roster of about 225 persons, primarily of African-American decent. The church averages around 175-180 per Sunday and has a good makeup of elderly, youth, young adults and children. It would be considered a black church. We use the term “the Black Church” as do other scholars and much of the general public as a kind of sociological and theological shorthand reference to the pluralism of black Christian churches in the United States.¹⁵ As was noted, our context reflect the Body of Christ, and is a church that is a Temple that Houses the Holy Spirit. It is also a church that practices the protestant views of Christian ordinances: Baptism and the Lord’s supper. In the writer’s opinion, there has to be a connection that we can draw upon from our biblical understandings of what the church is and how that relates to fostering intergenerational relationships in our context.

The Black Church throughout the 50’s and 60’s stood as the stronghold of the Black Community, fighting for equality and economic justice, and challenging its body to be self-determined and self-awareness. Black churches have always provided an important role in black families. Both have been enduring institutions, in providing the major socialization for many young people, children, teenagers, and young adults. It has been the ‘village’ for many persons to be taught, exercise gifts and talents, and to participate in the life of the church. Black Pastors, Sunday School teachers, Church leaders and other lay persons have played a significant role for the young, in teaching, modeling, and uplifting racial identity for many black children. In the interaction of

¹⁵C Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 1.

these two major institutions, (the black family and the black church), there has always existed a historical tradition of special caring for young children.¹⁶ As one of the few communal institutions in most urban and rural black communities, black churches were intimately involved in the complex network of black families. This is reflective of the theological view of the church as being the Body of Christ. As a matter of fact, the history of the black family and the black church have often provided models of intergenerational collaboration. We can trace this back to many black families that endured being transported primarily from West Africa, bound in chains, heading to America in order to be sold as slaves. These individuals were taken from their homeland disconnected from family and culture, stripped of their dignity, not allowed to read, right, and were constantly split from their families¹⁷. As E. Franklin Frazer puts it “Negroes were captured in Africa and were practically stripped of their social heritage.”¹⁸ Young children were often taken away from their mothers and sold as slaves, thus an informal system of adoption for children and a system of “kinship was developed among black extended families. Amazingly under these conditions enslaved Africans in America began to reestablish family structures. Children born out of wedlock, were not shunned nor stigmatized or labeled illegitimate, but they were accepted as members of the extended family. If there were no parents, children were adopted by grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, and were treated with care even under oppressive conditions.

¹⁶ Lincoln and Mumiya, 310.

¹⁷ James Deotis Roberts, *Roots of a Black Future; Family and Church* (Bowie, MD: The J. Deotis Roberts Press, 2002) 21-22.

¹⁸ E Franklin Frazier and C Eric Lincoln, *The Negro Church in America*, Sourcebooks in Negro History (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1974), 9.

This uniting through common struggle, further re-enforces that black families have always looked out for one another and have formed that village bond that we discussed earlier. We can conclude that black families and black churches have always been dynamically interactive with one another. The families constituted the building blocks for black churches, and the churches through their preaching and teaching, symbols, belief system, morality, and rituals provided a unity -a glue that welded families and the community to each other¹⁹. Churches provided educational opportunities such as Sunday School for children and adults, and the church provided other educational opportunities. Black clergy, often times provided counseling to couples and often times were sought out for advice to help them make major decisions in their lives. The Black Church also provided spiritual uplift during times of societal oppression. Often times going to church was a social all day event, beginning with Sunday school in the morning, followed by worship service, where they would hear a soul-stirring sermon, and then fellowship afterwards over Sunday dinner. The church in many ways provided the socialization for many black young people, children, teenagers, and young adults. They were able to witness and model after black clergy, lay persons, and other members of the black church.

The Black church not only nurtured black people but enabled them support one another even though they experienced brutalities that ought not to have been inflicted on any community of men²⁰. The faith, experiences, and reflection gave black families the courage, hope, strength to survive.

¹⁹ Frazier and Lincoln, 125.

²⁰ Frazier and Lincoln, 191.

Conclusion

Churches are not just institutions that help comprise civil society. They are also living communities of truth, grace and reconciliation. Adelekan in his book *A Charge to Keep: Re-Missioning the Urban Church For the 21st Century*, describes the church as a baobab tree, also known as “the tree of life”. According to Adelekan,

The baobab tree (*Adasonia digitate*) is also known as “the tree of life.” It is one of the most unusual trees on earth. Its branches resemble roots of other trees. Known for its resilience and resourcefulness, it lives in more than thirty countries across the globe. It has come to symbolize positivity, dignity, and adaptability. It provides food, shelter, and heat for the inhabitants of the savannah region of Africa. During the rainy season, it stores up water and other valuable nourishment to use during the dry season when other plants wither and die. It is able to produce fruit under the most unfavorable conditions; hence its name “the tree of life.” All its parts can be used -for food, fiber, dye, and fuel.²¹

Just as the baobab tree has been the source of sustenance for people in various parts of world, the Church of Jesus Christ, must also be able to stand upon its baobaness and remain unshaken, providing sustenance for one another and for the communities in which they are apart of. This is what the black church has been for many generations to black families; a source of sustenance, a source of education, a source of healing, and a source of provision. Many communities suffer from high rates of joblessness, racial segregation, and brokenness in many families, homes and lives. Yet by the power of the gospel, women, men, children, and families can, on an everyday basis, renew their spirits walk in the Spirit, and be transformed from the inside out. The Church should be and has been a community of sharing. Men, women, and children should be able to share scripture, their

²¹ Tokunbo Adelekan, *A Charge to Keep: Re-Missioning the Urban Church for the 21st Century* (Chicago, IL: MMGI, 2014), xxvi.

gifts and ministries, and their resources in order to develop *koinonia*, the greek word used for sharing in the New Testament, that refers to both the communion with Christ and material resources. The body of Christ is not merely a metaphor for the church's relationship to Christ but a real body whose members share both their suffering and their joy as Paul writes in 1 Cor. 12:26 "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it"

Not only is the Church a sharing community, but she also is a witness to Jesus and the hope of the kingdom. Jesus in Acts 1:8 told the hearers present that "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". As a community of love, faith, and hope, the congregation is God's instrument for the transmission of the gospel, and every person who is a part of the village, from the youngest to the most seasoned, are instruments used by God to reach the world. The first community of believers was comprised of Jewish believers, and according to Bruce Shelley's, *Church History in Plain Language*, included Jesus' mother, Mary, and some other kinsmen, along with the apostles: Peter, James and John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas, son of James.²² This community of believers emphasized living in community as the *ekklesia*, the early church, and began to live out their faith as witnesses of the way as Jesus promised they would. As Mark R. Gornik states in his book *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*, "central to the witnessing life is the role of the church. Although it is not to be identified as the kingdom, it is called to be the

²² Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 1995), 17.

community here on earth that demonstrates the glories of God's reign. As the body of Christ, the church is called to live for the peace, love, and joy of God's reign".²³ We see this demonstrated in the book of Acts, when we read how the church shared its life, possessions, and resources and as a result, the Lord was adding to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). Harvie M. Conn summarizes the witness of the church by saying

“We are God's demonstration community of the rule of Christ in the city. On a tract of earth's land purchased with the blood of Christ, Jesus the kingdom developer has begun building new housing. As a sample of what will be, he has erected a model home of what will eventually fill the urban neighborhood. Now he invites the urban world into that model home to take a look at what will be”²⁴

As Adelekan suggested, the Church should be the ‘tree of life’ for its members, its families and its communities. Where there is struggles in households, she should become an extended household. For children in neighborhoods where street violence threatens to overcome and overtake them, the church should be a sanctuary and a place to learn alternatives. To the young men on the corner who have been cut off by society, the church should extend the invitation and welcome them into the body. To the immigrant, the church should show hospitality. In communities where ethnic tensions run high, the church should model love and the discipline of forgiveness, the power of acceptance, and a faith without walls.

Finally, Black faith-based institutions, such as churches and mosques—perhaps the most stable and visible organizations in Black communities—can seize a golden

²³ Mark R. Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids, MI.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2002), 91.

²⁴ Harvie M. Conn, ed., *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1997), 88.

opportunity to pilot the promotion and the development our next generation. Historically, they have successfully provided numerous services to Black communities by being centrally located and Accessible, and by meeting the community's spiritual and physical needs. Furthermore, one of the greatest contributions of Black faith-based institutions to African American communities is that they have served as a bridge or a common ground between the Black middle class and their poorer counterparts as well as within the scope of various generations. From the hip-hop culture to the baby boomer generation, the black church has been a living, vibrant, institution, that has allowed many families and persons to maintain hope, develop the next generation of leaders, and provide the village where we are taught moral values, share in community, and live and work together.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Per a recent research release conducted by the Barna Research group, millennials are leaving the church in rapid numbers. In the study conducted, the research showed that nearly six in ten (59%) young people who grow up in who grew up in Christian churches end up walking away. The unchurched segment among millennials has increased in the last decade from forty-four percent to fifty-two percent, mirroring a larger cultural trend away from churchgoing in America.¹ In another report given by Rainer Research, approximately seventy percent of American youths drop out of church between the age of eighteen and twenty-two years. These findings suggested that the church in America must take an honest look at the fact that it is failing in attracting younger worshipers, and to hold on to the ones who do attend our churches. Many churches are facing several challenges in today's increasingly secular society. Recent study shows that we used to live in time that North America lived and served that in a church culture, however that is no longer the norm. It has then been suggested suggest that the number of unchurched persons in America has increased dramatically since 1991. Thus, indicating that we are becoming a much more pluralistic society that is often

¹ David Kinnaman, "The Priorities, Challenges, and Trends in Youth Ministry," *Barna Research Group*, April 16, 2016, accessed August 31, 2016, <https://www.barna.com/research/the-priorities-challenges-and-trends-in-youth-ministry/#.V8b4sZgrLIU>.

insensitive to traditional church culture values and traditions. We have seen generational and culture shifts in church times, church programs, building structure, music, dress, and even language, from what was considered traditional programming. With such a shift in our communities, the churches today are faced with challenges in church growth and keeping a healthy church. Many of the churches have membership that often hold on to traditional church cultural values. They still have the desire to reach persons in younger generations, who may not be familiar with those same values, but hold on to the pluralistic postmodern values that are being lifted today. There exists a great challenge in the life of church. We must be able to bridge the gap between Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, if the church is to remain healthy, relevant, and continue growing. At the same time not forgetting the biblical foundations because the facts of the Bible have not changed.

Most persons who are part of the Silent Generation (those born 1945 and before), Baby Boomers (Born 1946 to 1964) and Generation X (born between 1965-1976), who attended church and who are familiar with traditional church can recall a time where programs ruled and everyone for the most part participated in just about everything. Most churches used a common curriculum, studied the same thing, and normally whatever the church leaders asked the congregation what to do, the normalcy was that the congregation did it. Churches lived in a church culture that monitored her progress by

the four “Bs”: bodies, budgets, baptisms, and buildings². During those generations, it was common place that everyone went to church somewhere on Sunday morning, or at least knew they should, and even if persons were not regular attendees, the persons still knew church language, and appreciated visitations from the local pastor or church members who stopped and paid a visit. Annual revivals were surely certain to draw crowds of people and the church was the center of the community. Church indeed was different for persons who grew up in the church during these generations. Many of these traditions have died out or in the process of dying. Now what once worked before, may no longer have the same relevance or impact. For example, in our ministry context, revivals which used to pack out the church over a 3-5-night time frame, has dwindled down. It has become someone of a task to get busy members there, much less the unchurched. Afternoon services participation has dwindled down, and appreciated for surprise visits from church members, has turned into scheduled events that may or may not be appreciated. If Church participation has dwindled, then church involvement with those who attend has certainly waned. Check out these statistics:

- Fewer than half of those who say they are affiliated with any Christian church in America attend on any given week³

² Edward H. Hammett, *Reaching People under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations (Tcp Leadership Series)* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2007), 1.

³ Barna Group, “Largest Religious Groups in the United States of America” http://www.adherents.com/rel_USA.html, Accessed September 8, 2016, .

- In the decade from 1990 to 2001, those who identified themselves as secular or having no religion grew by 110 percent⁴
- The percentage of adults in the United States who identify themselves as Christians dropped from 86 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 2001⁵

Many churches may find themselves overwhelmed by such statistics, and may be asking questions such as “how do we hold on to our tradition, while trying to reach newer generations.” They may feel frustrated because they love the church, and want to see it grow. At the same time the church is a place where they are comfortable, where they come to fellowship and where they worship in a setting and style that helps them easily connect with God. For a church to reach out and engage younger generations may mean this place of familiarity will change and change radically. However, statistics, reveal to us that we must change and we should be encouraged. In an interview with Dr. Kara Powell, the executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute at Fuller Theological Seminary, conducted in 2009 by Christianity today, she argued that the future of youth ministry and consequently the health of many churches, will require bringing the generations together and forming an intergenerational church experience.

In this chapter, I will explore theories and methods from leading experts in the field of creating intergenerational worship communities, both in practical ministry and

⁴ Barna Group.

⁵ Barna Group.

the sociological effect it will have on the community of worship. It is with hope to identify methods that have used quantitative research and have developed methodologies that we may consider implementing in our current ministry to address the generational gap issue in our current ministry context.

Theoretical foundations in ministry practice

The author Edward Hammet in this book, *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations* talked about the potential that every Church community has in order to reach persons who do not know Jesus Christ. He argued that years ago, many communities regularly went to church. He states that the only competition that churches had back then were “friendly rivalries with the church down the street to see who had the best youth ministry”⁶. Today, that is no longer the case. In fact, according to Hammet, the church’s competition doesn’t come from another church or other denomination, but it comes from work, golf, NASCAR racing, football, gardening, or just a leisure day at home. This means that every community where churches reside, are filled with people who do not know Jesus Christ in a personal way. They have not connected with the church, nor know or understand church culture. There is much work to do and many people to reach, and in order to effectively reach these unchurched, the church will need to make building relationships a priority. Of

⁶ Edward H. Hammett, *Reaching People under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations (Tcp Leadership Series)* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2007).

course, we are assuming, that the church not looking to remain stagnant, but the church is seeking to evangelize all nations of all nations and all generations. Relationship making will allow the churches to get to know the needs of younger generations and make changes that will minister and attract persons in in various generations.

Before we consider how we can develop those relationships, it is important to consider the cultural challenges that churches face. Culture in its most basic definition are shared values, characteristics, beliefs, goals, traditions, and practices. It is important to recognize what the culture is of the church. Many church-goers tend to find and gravitate towards persons with whom they share common interest with, and in most cases, find comfort in developing relationships with whom they share familiar culture with especially language. We have created and cultivated a culture by our participants in the church, that over a time which people have learned to embrace and value. The challenge is that our world is ever changing, and it is very diverse. Sometimes people who are new comers to our churches culture may feel alienated or even rejected by the dominant culture in the church. We must take an honest look at the cultures that we have created and challenge ourselves to honestly assess if the cultures we have created will be warm enough to embrace those outside of our dominant cultures. Over the last several decades, cities, states, organizations, and institutions have found themselves challenged by multiculturalism and a pluralistic society⁷. Churches are not exempt from this ever-

⁷ Hammett, pg 7.

changing phenomenon. More and more we find persons walking through our doors who do not look like, smell like, and who do not speak the dominant cultures language. This is not to say, that churches should change their foundational biblical messages and traditions, but it is to say that we must consider how our dominant cultures function in our churches, and consider altering how we do things so that those who are outside of our dominant cultures might be able to hear the gospel message in a manner they can understand, embrace, and make apart their cultural experience.

We also must consider that people are living longer. Which means that on any given Sunday, a congregation might be ministering to five generations. Unfortunately, even though these churches might minister to five different generations, most churches in America conduct worship, have bible study classes, and just about everything else they have always done when the builder and baby boomer generations took the lead in building church buildings and programs. Many churches and denominations have not yet figured out how to address the needs of these different generations and culture that exist in their churches. If we are not open to effectively change it will be difficult to reach and engage younger generations. Part of the reason, Hammet asserts this, is because most of the leadership base in denominational life and in mainline Protestantism are of the older generation. We are beginning to lose members of the builder generation, and these primarily are the ones who have been faithful in building our churches and our institutions and giving to support local church ministers and missions. They are dying off, and baby boomers are being left to keep churches and denominations together. If

churches and denominations do not figure out ways remove or change generational barrier and engage, develop, and empower persons from younger generation, then the church and mainline denominations run the risk of dying off.

One of the things Hammett suggested that the church can do is focus on building bridges between generations and culture, rather than building barriers. To do this the author Hammett suggested that the church create and facilitate interview cycles among persons of all generations and culture. To facilitate this, he suggested to provide forums in a casual but structured atmosphere for the generations to engage and interview each other. Some sample questions that could be asked in this session are as follows

- Where do you experience God the most?
- What are the most meaningful experiences you have in life?
- What makes these experiences meaningful to you?
- What is missing in your church life or spiritual life?
- What would make your faith more alive?
- How can we make this happen for you?
- What do you value most about your church?

Secondly, Hammet suggested that each generation should plan to review musical taste of the generations. Music preferences and styles change every generation, and many of them have even been recycled throughout the years. In addition, music, will

offer distinctive preferences that each generation likes or dislikes. Some questions that could help facilitate meaningful dialogue regarding music are:

- What makes this music meaningful to you?
- What memories does the music recall?
- What feelings surfaced when you listen to this music?
- Who was with you when you first experienced this music?
- How do you connect with this music?

Dr. Gordon MacDonald, who currently serves as the Chancellor at Denver Seminary, as well as Pastor Emeritus of a church in Lexington, MA wrote about the challenges he faced in changing the culture in his church to embrace younger generations in his book *Who Stole My Church: What to Do when the Church you Love tries to Enter the 21st Century*. In the book, he opens up, by telling a story of how a storm hits a small New England town late one evening, but the pelting rain could not keep a small group of church members from gathering to discuss issues that had been brewing beneath the surface of their congregation. They could see their church was changing. The choir had been replaced by a flashy “praise band,” the youth no longer dressed in their “Sunday best,” and the beautiful pipe organ that used to be played now set unused. This all came to a head at that church meeting, where the lay leadership had proposed a \$150,000 initiative to upgrade the technology in their sanctuary. The assumption was that the leadership was convinced the proposal they prepared and presented, was going to be a hit with the membership and be endorsed to move forward. As the narrative unfolds we

discovered that the leadership and the Pastor had not done a good job assessing the congregation's feelings about these new renovations, and rather than coming to a vote, the Pastor and those in attendance spent the evening deliberating over the proposal. Ultimately, the moderator and the Pastor thought it would be best to table the proposal for another time and they all went home feeling dispirited. What followed afterwards, was a series of meetings the Pastor had with board members to further flush out the issues the church was facing. In the first meeting, the pastor began by apologizing to the attendees, expressing that he should have sat with them prior to the business meeting and seek out to hear some of the concerns of the congregation before presenting the proposal. That act of humility would open the floor for persons to express themselves openly and honestly regarding their concerns for their church. What the Pastor found out, was that there were people who did not understand why "all these new people feel they have to change everything". Another person expressed that she could not get used to him not wearing a tie to preach on Sunday mornings, because "she was taught that you honor God by the way you dress in church".⁸ Others expressed "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". Another person expressed "they're worried about the loudspeakers, when what we really need, is to get Wednesday night prayer service started again. Prayer meetings are the true test of how much a church loves the Lord. We used to fill the whole sanctuary with people on Wednesday nights". Another person stood and expressed concern that the young folks

⁸ Gordon MacDonald, *Who Stole My Church: What to Do When the Church You Love Tries to Enter the 21st Century*, Reprint ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 3.

were not giving faithfully, but rather when they did give, it was often designated to a project or a program, but that giving to the general fund was low. “Finally, a woman stood with a look of great sadness and said “All I know is that someone stole my church and I’d like to get it back”⁹. Many Pastors and congregational leadership have probably experience similar sentiments. Whereas the hot button may not have been over a \$120,000 proposal, the reality is that there exists tension from those who were instrumental in creating the dominant culture, versus those who were new to the culture and trying to move it forward. One of the things the Pastor of that meeting learned, was that many members who were present at the first meeting, express how much they missed how they did church; the programs, the ministries, the music, and the worship, and admitted they had a disconnect from younger generations. In my opinion, this Pastor was embarking on an honest journey and assessment of how open the church was to expanding its culture. How that Pastor and church addressed the issue they were facing over the proposal, was by creating a Discovery group with the Pastor that would faithfully meet on Tuesdays to talk about the challenges, and intentionally have conversations on how they would move the church forward while creating a culture that welcomed, valued, and appreciated the various generations in their church. By the time the discovery group was finished, after having met for twenty-one weeks, the group presented the Pastor and his wife with a gift, thanking them for helping them move from

⁹ MacDonald, 4.

“laggards into innovators and Early Adopters”. For this Pastor, the model he used to help address the issues, was to meet with a small group of influential persons in the congregation and help lead them from rejecting the sub dominant culture, embracing change, and including the younger generations. This is a model that I have chosen to utilize in our church context. We too have formed a “discovery group”, in which we have walked through each chapter of this book, and have used the guiding questions to facilitate our discussions. Some of the questions that were suggested is as follows:

1. Discuss some of the things that make some people feel like strangers in their own congregations
2. What does it mean to say that some leaders have no idea what they are getting into when they engage in “growth talk?”
3. Discuss possible thoughts or feelings people might have when they “fall out of alignment” with their church
4. List some of the unfortunate responses that people pursue when they feel disconnected to their church.
5. List common experiences the persons in the discovery group might have in common
6. Name some characteristics associated with the builder/silent generation, baby boomer, generation x, millennials, and generation y. Help each person understand what influences each generation had
7. What does it mean to belong?

Dr. Mark Harden, the former Dean of Boston Campus for Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, presented a lecture entitled *The Relevant Church in the 21st Century: Where Proclamation and Stewardship Meet*. After opening the lecture with the presentation on data and current trends of five generations who are affiliated with the church, he talked about the necessary transition from moving “beyond the attendance & participation Paradigm” and focus on the basic relevance of human needs. He argued that basic human needs include: belonging, social competence, power, and value (self-worth). If this is a basic need of all humans, then certainly we ought to consider this in our churches when we talk about relationship building.¹⁰ In our basic need to belong, Dr. Harden argues that Significance is found with acceptance, attention, and affection. To lack significance is to be rejected, ignored, and not to belong. In our small group discussions, like Pastor Macdonald, it is important that persons who belong to a community and or church, feel like they have significance in the community in which they live, worship, and serve. If we are going to move to a multigenerational experience, each generation must feel like they have significance. When we reject and ignore the needs of others, it may cause them to feel rejected, ignored, isolated, and an outsider to the dominant culture. He further went on to explain the basic need of persons feeling empowered-that is the power is shown in the ability to control one’s behavior and gain

¹⁰ Mark Harden, “The Relevant Church in the 21st Century: Where Proclamation and Stewardship Meet” (lecture, Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Brockton, MA, October 15, 2015).

the respect of others. Without feelings of power, individuals feel helpless and without influence.

How then does the 21st century church address the challenges of meeting their congregation's basic needs of significance? One way he suggests, is for the various generations in a congregation to engage with one another and to be honest to themselves regarding their prejudices and misunderstandings of other cultures. One example he said was when baby boomers engage millennials (whom he called Digital Natives) we must be familiar with their culture and consider several factors regarding their world view.

Consider the following regarding the Digital Natives:

- They are the greatest influence of the World Wide Web
- They know how to get things cheaper, faster, and more reliable
- They are the most diverse and accepting of diversity
- They are “immigrants” in a baby boomer controlled world
- They are consumer-oriented in their approach
- They thrive by creating small individualized spaces within larger spaces¹¹

Some of Generational traits of the Digital Natives are as follows:

- Choice-personal freedom to think, act, and feel as one does apart from external pressure to conform to a specific mode of behavior
- Convenience-the reason to act or ability to get the things what one needs based upon a high degree of Accessibility
- Pragmatism-the approach one has toward problem solving and making decisions when seeking to achieve goals in life situations

- Self-definition-perceptions about self in relationship to others from one context to another
- Customization-valuing the ability to express or seek out their own distinctiveness and or uniqueness

From the Baby Boomers perspective, these digital natives grew up and are growing in a different world, but they are also sharing the same space, and environment with other generations and culture. The church can seek to develop programs that will assist various generations to stay connected to their individual environment, or it can develop programs that promote a culture of a shared environment. Many churches do well in creating programs that help generations stay connected to their individual cultures, that is, in developing youth ministries, family life ministries, social events, entertainment, and leisure recreation, but fail miserably in developing programs that create a shared church environment. Shared environment strategies are where the Church is intentional in creating norms that all share in, opportunities that all share in, and the support necessary for everyone. In a shared environment, the norms, support structures, and opportunities that are Inter-related. They are interdependent and mutually supportive as a system and a change in one will cause changes in the others. Any change will affect the whole. Some of the ways we can help churches move in this direction are: (a). Empower members to think of church (ekklesia) as a lifestyle through which the whole life of the church matters. (b). Create opportunities for participation by letting all generations inspire church ministries that motivate them. We have done car washes together, sponsored teas,

and have collectively planned church picnics where every generations input was solicited and valued. Lastly, create an environment that encourages and supports people operating in their generational values orientation! We encourage our young people to utilize social media, digital devices in our worship experience, as well as keep pew bibles in the pews for other generations i.e. (silent, baby boomers and older millennials).

Theoretical Foundations from Another Discipline

The issues that arise from bridging the gap between Baby Boomers and Millennials is not only prevalent in Mount Moriah Baptist Church, but also exists in the secular world, as well. Dr. Tim Elmore who is a leading psychologist and the founder and president of Growing Leaders, an Atlanta-based nonprofit organization created to develop emerging leaders, is a best-selling author, international speaker, and one of the country's leading experts on Generations Y and Z. Dr. Elmore wrote a book entitled *Generation iY: Secrets to Connecting with Today's Teens & Young Adults in the Digital Age*, in which he introduces the reader to generation iY. These persons are described as those Millennials, who are born after 1990 and are younger than Millennials generally defined as those born between 1982 and 2001. Think about why Dr. Elmore calls these individuals Generation iY. He states "Why this title? It's because of the tangible impact of the "I" world (the Internet) on their lives. This population, born in the 1990s and afterward, has literally grown up online. Theirs is the world of the iPod, iBook, iPhone, iChat, iMovie, iPad, and iTunes. And for many of them, life is pretty much about "I."¹² This generation is part of a new world, an iWorld, and it belongs to these young people who have grown up in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century. These persons are not only connected by their ages, but

¹² Dr Tim Elmore, *Generation Iy (Updated and Expanded): 5th Anniversary Edition* (Atlanta, GA: Elevate Entertainment, 2015), Amazon Kindle edition location 177.

they are also connected digitally through shared music, shared ideas, shared tragedies, shared web sites and television, shared technology, shared media, and ready or not, they are not entering the adult world.¹³ They are our students, our children, our neighbor's children, our youth in our churches, and whether we are ready for them or not they are here and they are impacting ever fabric and fiber of our society. In fact, per the Center for Generational Kinetics, over the last two years, Millennials have become the largest generation in the U.S. workforce. They are also the fastest-growing customers in the marketplace, and recent studies have shown that millennials exhibit different attitudes toward employment, sales and marketing, and are challenging many conventional strategies and approaches.¹⁴ It is imperative that we take notice of this emerging generation. Wake up and make some adjustments in the way we engage and interact with them, so that we can foster healthy relationships in the work force, in our communities, and our churches.

How should the baby boomer generation respond to this rapidly changing culture shift? First, it must be recognized that we are in the midst of what Dr. Elmore calls "the aftershock" a term that he used in reference during his fourteen years spent in California and having experience living with and through earthquakes. Every earthquake is followed by one or more smaller vibrations called aftershocks or smaller shifts that could

¹³ Elmore, 178.

¹⁴ "An Intro to Generations, accessed December 9, 2016," <http://genhq.com/faq-info-about-generations>".

occur just hours or days after the initial quake. He further elaborated by stating the following:

“Today we’re experiencing a cultural shift, and social metamorphoses are occurring at a faster rate than ever before. The world that adults created in the 1980’s has come to impact us and even haunt us. That decade represents the initial “quake.” The first decade of the twenty-first century represents the aftershock. It has sparked changes even within a generation of people. In other words, the students born at the beginning of Generation y are different than the younger ones within the same generations.”¹⁵

He further explained that between 1998 and 2003, social scientists were elated with their findings on this new generation of kids that were dubbed Generation Y, or millennials and were encouraged by their early findings of this generation. They discovered that:

- Teen Pregnancy was down
- Drug abuse was lower than their parents
- Violent crime was at its lowest in twenty years
- Education and civic involvement was at a record
- The students were optimistic about their prospects of changing the world¹⁶

Although, Social Scientist were excited, things began to change after the first thirty-five million Generation Y kids approached adulthood, and their younger siblings were born. These younger people of Generation Y looked and acted different than their

¹⁵ Dr Tim Elmore, *Generation Iy (Updated and Expanded): 5th Anniversary Edition* (Atlanta, GA: Elevate Entertainment, 2015), Amazon Kindle edition location 524.

¹⁶ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation /by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss; Cartoons by R.j. Matson.* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 198.

older counterparts. For example, the earlier kids, were found to be more engaging, active and willing to submit and listen. The newer generation was found to be more lethargic, self-absorbed and more likely to be loners. There are several contributing factors that were discovered, but the chief factor that had been found was the impact of technology. Case and point, the University of Michigan Institute for social research looked at seventy-three studies that gauged empathy among 14,000 students over a thirty-year time period. What was discovered was that empathy has been in a steep decline, particularly since the year 2000. What they found in their research was that students today displayed forty percent less empathy than the students in the 1980's and 1990's. One of the reasons found for students appearing to be less empathetic was that they are having fewer face-to-face interactions and communicating instead through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Music.ly, and Youtube.¹⁷ The point is this, that the kids of Generation iY have only known a world that has been online. They have been online since preschool and cannot imagine how life would be without the internet. The Kaiser Family Foundation reported in 2010 that kids between eight and eighteen are spending at least seven and a half hours online, watching Netflix, posting on Facebook, shopping online, tweeting, or reading an e-book.¹⁸ This is the world of generation iY, and if we do not

¹⁷ Stephanie Steinberg, "A Change of Heart for College Students," *USA Today*, June 8 2015, accessed December 12, 2016, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/LIFE/usaedition/2010-06-08-empathyresearch08_st_U.htm.

¹⁸ *Millennials* (Verizon Digital Media Services, March 2014), accessed December 12, 2016, https://www.verizondigitalmedia.com/content/verizonstudy_digital_millennial.pdf.

recognize how influenced they are by technology, we will miss opportunities to engage with them, and help them navigate their world.

Secondly, Dr. Elmore offered that adults should help generation iY and millennials find their way if there is a willingness to listen and engage. We must prepare them for the future and then enable them to discover their purpose- vocation, passions and strengths. We must also help them to engage the world around them. Dr. Elmore also stated that when we enable generation Y to think for themselves, then that is when they will become people of influence.¹⁹ This generation has been more about safety, maintenance and convenience, rather than adventure and discovering their purpose. We have spent more time protecting and coddling them, instead of preparing and challenging them out to rise and mature into adulthood preparedness. We have got to engage them and prepare them to be our future leaders. If we can help them discover their purpose and ignite them with vision for their future, they will have incentive to become the best persons they can be.

Lastly, the author Dr. Elmore suggested that part of helping generation iY is to help them think through five critical decisions. He suggested that the following questions should be held as topics of conversations between students and their parents, or students and mentors. The five questions suggested are as follows:

¹⁹ Millennials, .

1. What are my values? This question is important because values help to keep a person on course as he or she pursues his or her vision. When persons fail to determine what their values are before they pursue their vision, they may compromise the person they are seeking to become. To help them determine their values we may want to ask more probing questions such as, what do you want to be, and what do you want to be remembered for? What qualities in other people do you most admire? What statement will be written about you in your obituary?
2. What vision do you want to pursue? This is a question intended to help them develop the “bigger picture goal”, that is to help them develop vision. Vision helps to develop incentives for their decision making
3. What is My Virtue? Often times we think of virtue in terms of morality, but virtue can also mean strength. We must help generation iY discover what their strengths are and how can they use their strengths to improve the world around them. Some ways to help them discover their strengths are to ask questions like “What do I do best?” “What do others tell me about my strengths?” and “what do I enjoy doing the most?”
4. What is the best Venue for me? This question is all about helping young people determine their location or context in which they want to live and work.
5. What vehicles will I employ to help me reach my goal? A vehicle is simply a means to reach a destination. In this context, the vehicle(s) we should try to help

young people determine their destination are their day-to-day choices and activities that will enable them to fulfill their vision.

Based on theoretical models researched and presented in both practical ministry and the theoretical models suggested by Dr. Elmore, I have gained new insight on how to address the need of bridging the generational gap in my ministry context. One of the models, that may prove to be effective in our context, is to create a discovery group of eight to ten individuals consisting of members from five generations taken from MMBC and that will meet for a series of weeks, and engage them in a series of intentional questions and dialogue. This will be designed to learn about, and from each other, foster community relations, and have each generation engage with one another. Both models offer up a series of “discussion starters” that can be helpful with getting the group to facilitate conversation with one another.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Sunday morning worship is the climax of the week at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church where the author currently serves as the Pastor. The church's congregational demographic makeup is primarily African Americans, Caribbean Americans, and other cultures and comprises of parishioners from at least five different generations. This leads to an exciting blending of generations and cultures whom worship together and who foster a rich and diverse community. However, MMBC like many other congregations in North America has experienced some challenges regarding age-segregation, and seeks to create an intergenerational worship experienced. There are some, who are part of the millennial and generation Z, and who do not feel that their voices are valued even though they are connected to the ministry and church community. There are some persons, who are older and part of the baby boomer generation and find it difficult engaging and connecting with those of younger generations. Since our church operates primarily out of an age-based model of interaction and spiritual formation, there exist few opportunities for cross-generation interaction. The current age-focused approach is certainly appropriate and beneficial for spiritual development. However, increasing research suggest that intergenerational experiences are just as valuable. Making worship intergenerational requires committing to people of all ages, valuing each generation, and seeing all people as significant and valuable in the body of Christ. If the church is to

develop new leadership, evangelize, reach others, and promote the gospel, then we must create a culture that values, respects, and engages each generation. Bridging the gap between multiple generations and culture, will result in developing a much more vibrant worship experience and church community.

The intention of this project is to create an intergenerational opportunity for learning, sharing, and spiritual formation at MMBC. This project was implemented over a six-week time frame, and revolved around two separate groups, that met separately for five sessions, and combined on the sixth session. Two of the groups met on different days of the week. One group met on Wednesday afternoons, while the other group meet on Friday evenings. The third group, was an intentional effort to bring both groups together to meet for the final session. This meeting took place on a Tuesday evening. The groups functioned independently and had no interactions with one another, until the combined session.

The participants that made up these discovery groups were chosen through a volunteer process. Due to the intergenerational nature of the project, I took advantage of making a public announcement on two consecutive Sundays in June of the year 2016. In those announcements, I indicated that I was doing a project with the intent on creating opportunity for intergenerational collaboration, and that I needed volunteers. I asked them to reach out to me via email or phone number if they were interested. After collecting a list of names, I contacted the participants and gave them dates and times for the meetings. I also indicated, that I needed a six-week time commitment from them and

to the best of their abilities commit to the weekly meetings. For participants under eighteen, I contacted our youth minister and had him recommend persons who might be willing to participate, and who would be open to interacting with older persons. Based on his recommendations, I contacted the parents of the recommended, children and teens and explained the nature of the project with them, as well as had each participant sign a parental consent form. The groups were formed and finalized in July 2016 and consisted of eight persons in each group.

To describe the makeup of these groups, I utilized the parameters used in William Strauss and Neil Howes, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*. Each group in total consisted of persons from different generations. Group one which met on Wednesday afternoons, consisted of older persons representing three generations:

- SFG1, 1944¹, 73-year-old Silent Female
- BMG1, 1946, 71-year-old Boomer Male
- BFG1, 1947, 70-year-old Boomer Female
- BFG1, 1955, 62-year-old Boomer Female
- BMG1, 1963, 54-year-old Boomer Male
- BFG1, 1960, 57-year old Boomer Female
- XFG1, 1963, 45-year-old Generation X Female
- XMG1, 1977, 39-year old Generation X Male

¹ These shorthand designations will be used to reference those whose quotes are included in this document.

Group two, met on Friday evenings and consisted of eight participants from three different generations. They are:

- XMG2, 1976, 41-year-old Generation X Male
- XMG2, 1977, 40-year-old Generation X Female
- MFG2, 1983, 34-year-old Millennial Female
- MFG2, 1984, 33-year old Millennial Female
- MMG2, 1995, 22-year old Millennial Male
- MMG2, 1999, 18-year old Millennial Male
- ZFG2, 2005, 11-year old Generation Z Female
- ZMG2, 2005, 11-year old Generation Z Male

In total, there were sixteen participants that spanned across five generations. Since these volunteers are current members of MMBC there were already preexisting relationships. Some of the people knew each other from bible study classes or from other church events. Others knew each other from relationships outside the church. Yet, there were still others who knew of each other, but whose interactions had been limited.

The meetings six sessions were held during the months of August and September 2016, in one of our classrooms at MMBC. This provided the necessary space for privacy and allowed for open sharing. Every week, I provided libations and a light snack for both the Wednesday and Friday night groups. In addition, the class room was set up with

chairs in a circle. This format allowed for our sessions to feel less like a traditional bible study, where you have a teacher teaching, and students sitting and writing notes, and more so like a small group community. The groups were also informed that I would record our sessions via my cell phone for taking notes.

The first meeting for each group included introductions from the group members, as well as an overview of the project. I emphasized that for the next five weeks we were going to embark on a journey together with God, Scripture, and with each other. I explained that we would look at a passage of scripture was relevant to our conversation and study generational differences using a chart that I provided for them². This chart was an easy way for the participants to visually see what generation they were apart of as well as values that influenced them. I also handed out a questionnaire for them fill in. Lastly, I shared what my role in the process of the project. I explained to them that I would lead, and facilitate our conversations, but also that I would take notes and observe the groups dynamics.

The next four sessions followed the following format. The group would come have casual conversation before we started, and would partake in refreshments. When it was time to start, I would call the group together where we would begin. I would begin by asking one of our participants to open with prayer, then I would share some opening remarks. Afterwards, we would read a passage of scripture, and I would ask them how

²This chart is made available by the West Midland Family Center
<http://www.wmfc.org/uploads/GenerationalDifferencesChart.pdf>

the scripture relates to them. Then we would enter conversation around the topic I introduced. These sessions typically took an hour to facilitate.

The final session last two hours, and consisted of bringing both groups together. The purpose of bringing both groups together was for the participants to share and interview one another. In this session, was held in a bigger classroom. I still set up chairs in a circle, but I also set up stations where the participants could sit and interview one another and share in each other's experience's.

Methodology

The method of research I used was action reflection and included collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Qualitative research is interpretive research; therefore, projects of this nature necessitate descriptions of the events that took place³. To gather data, the more angles of perspective that can be attained by any given experience, then the more reliable the interpretations of the results. In addition, it is important for me to consider other perspectives of the discovery group experience. In order to achieve a more robust description of these groups I triangulated the data as a way to gain different perspective of the experience. Triangulation is a way to cross-check the data and provide depth to the analysis. This process provided multiple angles and perspective to the events taking place in our discovery groups. For the purpose of this project, I chose the following viewpoints for consideration: the researcher (myself), the individual

³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 11.

participants, and the collective group (at the last session). More specifically, I used a *phenomenological* approach to attain the qualitative data. This kind of approach can be considered more of a philosophical approach, and the goal of this approach is to understand how others view the world, and how this view may vary from commonly held views, by focusing on a person's subjective interpretation. This approach is normally done by interviewing the subjects to learn their impressions of an experience. Due to the nature of my project, this kind of analysis was appropriate, given the desire to explore the experiences of the cross-generational participants.

Researchers Perspective

The initial perspective of evaluation was that of the researcher. As the researcher, I utilized field notes as the primary method for recording the observations made during our group sessions⁴. These notes generally included descriptive information as well as reflective observations. These notes generally focused on the behavior and activities of individuals in our sessions, and were intended to provide an accurate depiction of what took place. Since my projects focus is cross-generational engagement and interaction, I took notes through the lenses of intergenerational encounters amongst the participants. I took notes based on what was stated and what occurred. I took notes on how people responded to certain questions, statements, or when someone responded with "this generation" or "that generation".

⁴ See appendix A for the field note template.

Much like Dr. Macdonald, in his book, *Who Stole My Church: What to do When the Church you Love Tries to Enter the 21st Century*, I organized my notes, so that I could record the date, time, and place of our discovery group. When there were, notable statements made, I would write the person's name, what generation they were a part of, what role they played in the church (if any), and any other personalized data that contributed to the subject's experience. Every session, I would begin by making mental notes of what I observed of the participants and how they socially interacted with one another. I noted what was said, who gravitated towards whom, and the subject matter of discussion. Once the sessions ended, I would head upstairs to my office, and transcribe the notes. This allowed me to flush out my thoughts, impressions and questions regarding what I observed. Thankfully, I also used my phone which served as a recording device. This enabled me to go back over the session capture more precisely what was said.

Individual Participants Perspective

The second perspective of evaluation was that of the participants. From this viewpoint, I used questionnaires and interviews to determine the perspectives of the discovery group. Over the six weeks, I distributed two questionnaires⁵. The first questionnaire was given at the first session, and the participants were asked to take the

⁵ See appendices B and C for the templates of these questionnaires.

questions home, where they could reflect, then write a response. The responses were shared at the following meeting. The questions given were:

1. Discuss some of the things that make some people feel like strangers in their own congregations
2. What does it mean to belong?
3. When you feel disconnected from the church? How does it make you feel?
4. Where do you experience God the most?
5. List any common experiences you have with other persons in the group

The intent of the first questionnaire was to ask reflective open questions to ascertain how the participants viewed their church experience and potentially how they viewed various sub-cultures in the church. I never mentioned anything about generational differences, as I did not want to influence anyone's response. As we discussed these questions in the second session, I was mindful about asking questions in a way where the participants could make the connection without my influence. I also wanted to ask questions that each participant could respond based on their own experiences and in their own language. For example, I did not expect an 11-year old Generation Z female to respond using the same language as a 71-year old baby boomer.

The second questionnaire was given at the end of the fifth session. The questions asked in this questionnaire were:

- How has God shaped your faith and understanding through this experience?

- What moment was the most meaningful to you?
- How has the process of engaging with other generations impacted your faith?
- Would you consider working with other generations in ministry?

This questionnaire was also designed with the intent of being open to encourage self-reflection, but I also added questions that would prompt them to think about the generational component of our sessions. After six weeks of interacting and engaging various age groups, I wanted the group to reflect on their experiences and what the other generations added to their experience. I was also able to capture the participant's individual perspectives when they answered these questions. Each group received the exact same questions at the exact same times via a hard copy. They were encouraged to respond and bring back their responses to share at our final meeting if they so desired.

Group Perspective

The third perspective of evaluation was that of the combined discovery group. For our last session, we combined both groups to come together for a two-hour session. As was custom, the group came in and sat down. I encouraged the group to sit in different seats, and the participants for the most part found themselves sitting next to someone different than the previous meetings. In this meeting, I opened with prayer, scripture, and gave instructions on how the evening would go. We first began by sharing the results of the previous questionnaire. After persons were done sharing, I proceeded to

use the overhead projector, so that people could see the questions for discussion. The questions were⁶:

- What do you think God was doing during this experience?
- How has your faith been impacted by engaging with other generations?
- How would this experience be different without the variety of other generations?
- What kind of church would Mount Moriah be if everyone in the congregation participated in a discovery such as one you did?

The intent of these questions was to allow the group to collectively reflect on all they had learned, discussed, experienced, and reflected. As with the second questionnaire, the questions were open, however I was intentional in asking explicit questions about the intergenerational dimension. I wanted them to collectively reflect on the impact of their intergenerational experiences and communicate that in their own language.

Conclusion

The intent of this project was to create an intergenerational opportunity for persons of MMBC to engage with one another and reflect on their experiences. The time studying scripture, and discussing topics through the lenses of generational viewpoints allowed the participants to share own experience, and learn about other's. Two separate groups gathered over the course of five weeks, and ended the sixth session together.

⁶ For the survey template please refer to appendix E.

Along with my field note observations, audio recordings, and the groups responses to questionnaires I could collect raw data to analyze and summarize.

Summary of Learning

The intent of this project was to create an intergenerational opportunity for persons of MMCB to engage with one another, learn, and reflect on their own experiences. For six weeks, we met, studied scripture, and discussed topics through the lenses of their generational viewpoints. In order to gain multiple perspectives, I gleaned data through three different perspectives; the researcher, the participants, and the group. First, my field notes served as the perspective of the researchers. Secondly, two questionnaires captured the perspective from the participants. Lastly, a final combined discovery group session and interview served as the third perspective. These perspectives were then triangulated to ensure a more valid description of the results.

Two groups were formed consisting of eight participants. Initially the goal was to compare the two groups. To do so, I followed the same script and structure every session to ensure continuity and consistency between the groups. However, through sifting and organizing the data, I realized that many of the intergenerational undercurrents were similar in each group. This report then will focus on the themes that emerged from both groups. In this section I will describe the three perspectives separately and note prominent themes from each perspective.

Researcher Perspective

As mentioned before, I utilized field notes to capture data I observed from each session. Each session I would jot down notes regarding the interaction of the participants, things that were shared, the content of their reflections and any other prominent thing that grabbed my attention. While I observed many aspects of our time together, I tried to focus my lenses through the intergenerational dynamic. After the sessions, I then would go to my office and listen to the audio recordings. This helped to refresh my memory as well as give me a more accurate description of what transpired. I then would organize my notes and thoughts, and write up a reflection for that session. The following highlights the themes that emerged from the researcher's perspective.

The first theme that emerged from my research was *Intergenerational Environment*. Every week for both groups, I set the room up the same way. The chairs were in a circle and there was a table in a corner where snacks were made available and coffee brewed. The snack table became a place of informal conversation before and after the meetings. All generations, both young and old, congregated near the snack table and informally chatted away. They talked of happenings with family, school projects, work related projects, and church news. What was interesting to note, is that in my own presuppositions, I assumed that most folks would find their seat, and that would become their residential seat for the sessions. I was surprised that wasn't the case, but that often times there was changes in the seating order. This small change in where people sat, would be a cause for new conversation and new engagement among them.

Also for each session, we would open prayer, introductions, a scripture reading, and reflection of the scriptures. The introductions were normally attached with an activity that prompted the participants to share something about themselves. For example, I would ask participants to introduce themselves followed by something about them. The introduction starters ranged from sharing of musical taste, to places traveled, to favorite movies. These introductory prompts enabled me to learn something about the participants, and for the participants to learn something about each other. Everyone would participate, although at times some needed a little encouragement to share. As time went on in these sessions, participants felt more comfortable opening up and sharing themselves. Each week, I asked different persons to open with prayer and or read the scripture. There was difference in praying styles, voice tone and voice inflection. Some read confidently and used voice volume where everyone could hear, while others were more quiet and whispered. Everyone was heard in these sessions, and everyone had opportunities to share. There existed a healthy mutual respect. Also, if there were any breakout discussions, I would ask the group to partner up with someone. Every week they were encouraged to partner with someone different. Unbeknownst to them I encouraged them to interact with persons outside of their generation. Boomers listened to Millennials, Generation X'ers listen to Generation Y, and everyone respected the time when someone was sharing. When persons shared, I encouraged all of us to listen intently with our hearts, and not through the lenses of preconceived notions. We closed

each session with prayer, and discerning what God was doing. Confidentiality was emphasized and we would depart.

For the researcher, I observed the environment that the environment in which we met played vital role in setting the tone for these sessions. The chairs placed in a circle, where placed without name tags and persons were able to come to the circle as equals and with equal voice. It was stressed in each session that everyone's experience and input was valued. The experience was presented as a collective journey and I was intentional of using community language in our conversations. There was fellowship over the meal table (albeit it was snacks), and there was an environment created of mutuality and inclusion. I didn't observe anyone who was standoffish. Even if persons might have experienced a hard day, there would be someone who would take notice and engage the person. In short, an environment was created and cultivated where cross-generational experiences and engagement could take place.

It is important to consider the *Intergenerational Environment* as a theme because the context of this space certainly impacted the intergenerational dynamics. One person (MMG2, 1999), shared in one of our last sessions, how unique this time was in having a space where everyone could learn together. Another shared (XMG1) how much they appreciated a safe "space" where they could share and gain valuable perspectives of others. Comments such as these, indicated to me that having a safe space to share is an important theme for everyone. I reflected, and noted how important this dynamic is for the Church. If we are going to create an intra-generational ministry and community, we

have got to be intentional of creating a “safe” space, where everyone feels equal and valued. Intentional effort was given to create an environment that gave opportunity for cross-generational expression. Based on my observations this is an important theme that emerged and could potentially impact the Church if crafted carefully

The second theme that emerged was *Appreciation of Intergenerational Experiences*. It was commonly noted that participants appreciated sharing with others from a different generation. They used the charts that I handed out in the first session to quickly refer to the generational context of others. One of the most telling factors for the emergence of this theme came from the second questionnaire. One of the questions asked of the group was; How has the process of engaging with other generations impacted your faith? In both groups, participants lifted positive experiences from engaging with other generations. One participant (ZFG2, 2005) stated “I loved watching the older people pray. I learned that I can come to God and don’t have to use fancy words, but he knows my heart”. Another participant (BFG1, 1960) in our last session said “It is so important for us to continue to appreciate one another. We all have experiences that are valuable to share. I have learned much from listening to these young people. They are our future, and we must include them in our everyday lives!” This positive feedback along with others summarized the groups dynamics appreciation for one another. One millennial (MFG2, 1983) who is thirty-four said “I have been known to be standoffish to others in the congregation, especially some of the Older women, because they always come across so judgmental, but now I can appreciate their constructive critique through love. It’s

because they have been there before, and I really enjoyed listening to their stories of overcoming”. One of the interesting things to note, is the majority of the participants highlighted that MMBC needed to do more activities like this. One person a seventy-one-year-old Male, inquired how could we implement this conversation in a broader context particularly to engage our young people more.

The last theme that emerged was the impact of *Scripture and the Intergenerational Dynamic*. As stated before in our sessions we would begin with a scripture and a brief devotion. Each session participants were invited to read the text, reflect on the text, and share their perspectives of how it applied to their lives. Even though the groups were made up of different generational cohorts, the scriptures and their faith allowed them to find common ground. Older and younger participants shared through their generational lenses how the scriptures impacted them. In the second session, we centered our devotion of Matthew 4:18-22, where Jesus calls His first disciples. We discussed the occupation of those who were called, and the fact that Jesus went to the sea and met these fishermen where they were. After reflection participants were invited to share their reflections. One comment that stuck out was from (SFG1, 1944) a seventy-three-year-old Silent generation female. She stated “I’ve been walking with Jesus for a long time, and I’ve learned over the years that it wasn’t me that chose, but it was Jesus who chose me. He met me where I was just like these disciples, and I’ve been following him ever since.” She further stated, “I’ve had some difficult days, but each day walking with Jesus has been sweeter and sweeter”. After she stated that a

boomer 39 year-old-male” sat and watched this woman give her story. I noticed tears welling in his eyes, and invited him to share. He stated his genuine appreciation for watching is elder share her testimony. For him observing the strength of this elderly mothers faith, was enough to encourage him, to “keep on walking with Jesus”.

I also observed in many of these conversations, those less knowledgeable of scripture deferred to those who had more knowledge in terms of sharing. They often sat and listened to the stories, and when prodded would share their insights. What I appreciated about observing this, it appeared that they were open to learn and hear what others had to say.

Participant’s Perspective-Summary of Questionnaires

To capture the experience through the perspective of the participants, I utilized two questionnaires that were given at different points in the process. The questions were distributed to both groups at the same time and were designed to collect data by providing a space for individual and communal reflection. The first questionnaire was given out after the first session, and the participants were encouraged to go home, reflect, respond, and to be ready to share their responses at the next session. The questions that were asked were:

1. Discuss some of the things that make some people feel like strangers in their own congregations
2. What does it mean to belong?
3. When you feel disconnected from the church? How does it make you feel?
4. Where do you experience God the most?
5. List any common experiences you have with other persons in the group

As indicated previously, I didn't mention anything about generational dynamics. Rather I wanted to see how the participants independently reflected their feelings about subgroups whom may feel isolated. The questions were designed to have the participants consider what one might feel if they view themselves as being disconnected or valued in a larger group. In the case of my project this group is the church. After these questionnaires were collected, I analyzed the readings of the two groups separately. To the best of my ability, I considered the notes specifically through the eyes of the participants and their generational influences. Like the researcher perspective, I summarized the notes and developed themes that emerged from their perspectives.

The first theme that emerged from our sessions was our *Intergenerational Engagement with the Word*. Participants noted their appreciation for reading God's word in a cross-generational setting. They noted that they gained new insights in the passages as well as applying the scriptures. They noted their appreciation of a "caring environment to talk about the bible" (XFG1, 1963) and how we were all 'children of

God' (SFG1,1944). For one young man, shared his appreciation, that he could ask questions without feeling judged.

The conversational dynamics also impacted the views of Scriptures, as participants were able to share the application of scripture through their lenses. For example, one Millennial (MFG2) shared that she posted lessons on her social media page to share with her friends and network. This led to our most senior participant (SFG1, 1944) to ask "Well how do you do that? I want my friends and network to see what we are talking about too!" that same young lady, later reflected that her interaction with the Silent generation made her feel valued. She had not considered that she had something that the senior mother could learn from her.

I concluded that there was a deep sense of appreciation for the reading of scriptures together. They enjoyed getting to know people, and shares stories of family, faith, and community.

The second theme that emerged was that of the *Impact of Intergenerational Community*. One of the things both groups affirmed from the second questionnaire was that through the discovery group meetings they gained a deeper sense of community. In fact, over half of the participants noted they experienced a deeper sense of community with their groups because of the cross generational impact. One Millennial (MMG2, 1999) stated, "If we had more sessions like these, I think it would tear down the misconceptions that other people have of us millennials, and see that we are not anti-social, some of us genuinely yearn for community!"

Participants also affirmed the unique personal and communal benefits of being in cross-generational community. One Millennial (MFG2, 1984) expressed her excitement that she finally found out who made her favorite carrot cake for church, because of the discovery group. The boomer (BFG1, 1947) who was in the same group, was excited to share the recipe. The participants could engage each other over the common love for carrot cake. Many participants noted that finding common ground with other generations allowed them to be more open and accepting of different viewpoints. One participant (ZMG2, 2005) shared “it’s easier to connect with someone when you find something that you share in common, I just didn’t know I could find something in common with an older person”. For him, he was amazed that he found someone older whom shared his love for reading.

The final way the participants discussed the impact of intergenerational community came in the form of imagination. In the second questionnaire that was given out at the fifth session, participants were invited to imagine what Mount Moriah would be like if the church created an opportunity for intergenerational collaboration. One prominent quality predicted that MMBC would have a sense of openness and acceptance to others. Many persons noted that being around different ages would impact how you interact with other differences in the communion. Another quality that emerged was that participants experienced a greater sense of community formed within the groups. “We should take what we learned here and share it with everyone!” exclaimed an 11-year-old girl (ZFG2, 2005). Participants believed that the deep relationships formed through this

experienced would translate to the greater church community and build a stronger bond in the church. Lastly, there was a strong sense of community concern and care.

Participants over the six weeks, reported that as you get to know people of different ages and different stages of life, then you are more sensitive to their needs and are more open to help them in times of need.

Group Perspective-Final Interview

The final perspective of evaluation, came from the last session, in which both groups were combined. We met on a Friday evening for the sixth and final session. In this session, I set up the chairs in a semi-circle ensuring there was room for every participant and so that they could see the screen. On the screen, I had the following questions in which I would lead them in discussion:

- What do you think God was doing during this experience?
- How has your faith been impacted by engaging with other generations?
- How would this experience be different without the variety of other generations?
- What kind of church would Mount Moriah be if everyone in the congregation participated in a discovery such as one you did?

These questions were designed for the two groups to collectively imagine what creating an intergenerational space in a greater context. It was interesting seeing the group dynamics of both groups coming together. There were familiar exchanges of pleasantries, and there were also some surprised faces when they saw who else was

participating. However, the groups settled in and we begin business as usual. In this session. A boomer female suggested that a generation z male open our session with prayer, to which the others agreed and encouraged. The interesting I noted, was the shyness of the young male, and his reluctance to pray. However, when the group began to encourage him, the young boy collected his courage and his composure and led the group in prayer with confidence. “It’s amazing, what we can accomplish when we have the right support behind us” said a 39-year-old Generation X Male (XMG1, 1977).

As, I interviewed the group and we discussed the discussion points, the participants of the group offered open and honest feedback on how the group saw this experience. Some repeated themes that emerged were “mutual respect between the generations”, “support for all ages”, bonding/relationships” as well as “deep appreciation for others”. The group consented that these common themes emerged because of their collective experience during that six-week time frame.

Conclusion

After analyzing the collected data, and compared the three perspectives of the research, the participant, and the group, I compared the three perspectives to see if there were any cross intersection. Triangulating the data revealed that the project was successful in creating a space where intergenerational collaboration could take place. The participants visibly engaged and participated in the lives of one another, and many noted their appreciation for being with people of other ages. When I asked if they would recommend this experience to others in MMBC, both young people and older people

supported the thought. Both groups indicated a desire for more intergenerational created spaces. In short, there was clear evidence that this intergenerational experience was enjoyed and appreciated by all.

The purpose of my project was to create and explore an intergenerational experience where participants could learn about each other, share their faith and foster a greater sense of community. Based on the data collection and analysis of the qualitative data, I conclude that this project effectively created such an experience.

Beyond this project, I am hopeful about the possibilities of creating other intergenerational opportunities. Both groups ended their sessions wanting others to share in the same experiences they had shared, some have already taken steps to create those spaces. Our men's ministry for example, is currently working on Father/Daughter dance, that will surely create a space for intergenerational fellowship. We have seniors who now want to teach children's Sunday school. The buzz created by the preaching, teaching, and group sessions have contributed to the process of tearing down generational barriers, and for bridges of connectedness to be built. However, I am not naïve at the challenges of sustaining this progress. I realize that a variety of challenges can present themselves. For one, some will likely still prefer to engage with their own demographic and not want to be a part of an intergenerational space. Secondly, depending on the individual's personality and perspective, they may view this project as novelty and not as a strategic model to create change in our congregation worship experience.

Lastly, I must admit that before this project took place, I had heard about intergenerational ministry, but my knowledge was limited in the subject area. However, over the course of this project my interest grew and my appreciation of different generations grew deeper. Observing old and younger people openly ask questions and engage in the study of scripture was powerful. Engaging different generations on topics that ranged from musical taste, to dating, to how they saw the church through their generational lenses, for me brought a deeper conviction to the importance of an intergenerational church community.

I have grown a great deal as a result of this project. It has helped me connect with God more closely, because I understand there was no way I could complete this study using my own strength or intellectual capacity. There was no way I could complete this project without the help and support of my family. My wife encouraged me daily and when I wanted to quit she wouldn't let me, because she believed that the work would have an impact on our congregation. Not only did my family encourage me, but my love for Mount Moriah grew deeper because of this project. The willing volunteers to commit their time and gifts to this project have given me a deep appreciation for their willingness to be stretched, and work together to address challenges in our congregation.

APPENDIX A

FIELD NOTE TEMPLATE

Field Observation Note-Taking Form Mount Moriah Baptist Church, 2016

Date: _____ Event: _____

Time: _____ Place: _____

Reminders:

- The goal of field notes is to provide descriptive information that can be used to construct a narrative of what happened during the activity being described. Document what is actually taking place, not what you might have expected to happen.
- Obviously, it is impossible to record everything that takes place. Record information that is relevant to the purpose statement of the overall project. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the formative impact of reading Scripture in an intergenerational environment. When in doubt, write it down. • Relevant information could include descriptions of setting, people, activities, sights, smells, sounds, etc. • Use whatever shorthand or notes will be helpful to you.

The Setting (Some possibilities: How are objects arranged? Note when people arrive and with whom they arrive. How are the focus groups formed? Where do people sit? How are people dressed? If relevant, note the temperature, volume level, smells, and atmosphere of the room. Draw a picture if that is helpful.)

Time	Observations	Other points of interest

APPENDIX B

Discovery Group Questionnaire 1 Mount Moriah Baptist Church 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this questionnaire is to describe your experience participating in this discovery group. Your answers will be used in two ways. First, the answers you give are for your own reflection on the experience. Second, and related to John Page's Doctorate of Ministry Project Thesis, these answers will be used to help describe what is happening among the individuals in the discovery group. Related to that research, the submission of this questionnaire serves as its own "informed consent" that the information contained here may be used, anonymously for the sake of research.

Instructions

Please answer the questions below as honestly as possible about your reading experience. The answers you give will be respected and kept private. Your honest reflection is appreciated and will contribute to a better picture of the whole group. Take as much or as little space as you need to answer each question. After you finish answering the questionnaire please save the document and email that document back to John at jpage30@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation!

1. Discuss some of the things that make some people feel like strangers in their own congregations
2. What does it mean to belong?
3. When you feel disconnected from the church? How does it make you feel?
4. Where do you experience God the most?
5. List any common experiences you have with other persons in the group

APPENDIX C

Discovery Group Questionnaire 2 Mount Moriah Baptist Church 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this questionnaire is to describe your experience participating in this discovery group. Your answers will be used in two ways. First, the answers you give are for your own reflection on the experience. Second, and related to John Page's Doctorate of Ministry Project Thesis, these answers will be used to help describe what is happening among the individuals in the discovery group. Related to that research, the submission of this questionnaire serves as its own "informed consent" that the information contained here may be used, anonymously for the sake of research.

Instructions

Please answer the questions below as honestly as possible about your reading experience. The answers you give will be respected and kept private. Take as much or as little space as you need to answer each question. After you finish answering the questionnaire please save the document and email that document back to John at jpage30@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation!

1. How has God shaped your faith and understanding through this experience?
2. What moment was the most meaningful to you?
3. How has the process of engaging with other generations impacted your faith?
4. Would you consider working with other generations in ministry?

APPENDIX D

Generational Details of the Two Groups

Group 1: Wednesday Afternoon

- SFG1, 1944, 73-year-old Silent Female
- BMG1, 1946, 71-year-old Boomer Male
- BFG1, 1947, 70-year-old Boomer Female
- BFG1, 1955, 62-year-old Boomer Female
- BMG1, 1963, 54-year-old Boomer Male
- BFG1, 1960, 57 -year old Boomer Female
- XFG1, 1963, 45-year-old Generation X Female
- XMG1, 1977, 39-year old Generation X Male

Group 2: Friday Night

- XMG2, 1976, 41-year-old Generation X Male
- XMG2, 1977, 40-year-old Generation X Female
- MFG2, 1983, 34-year-old Millennial Female
- MFG2, 1984, 33-year old Millennial Female
- MMG2, 1995, 22-year old Millennial Male
- MMG2, 1999, 18-year old Millennial Male
- ZFG2, 2005, 11-year old Generation Z Female
- ZMG2, 2005, 11-year old Generation Z Male

Summary of Generational Boundaries:

- Silent Generation: the generational cohort born between 1925-1942.
- Boomer Generation: the generational cohort born between 1943-1960.
- Generation X: the generational cohort born between 1961-1981.
- Millennial Generation: the generational cohort born between 1982-2003.
- Generation Z: the generational cohort born between 2004-present¹

¹ I used the Strauss and Howe parameters for generational classification

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